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The Cambridge Platonists
and Their Place in Religious Thought

HULSEAN PRIZE ESSAY
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BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY
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Author's Preface

THE best introductions to a study of the Cambridge Platonists are Volume II of Tulloch's "Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century," and Bass Mullinger's "The University of Cambridge," Volume III, Chapter 5. I have used both extensively. Mr. Campagnac has edited a selection of their works and written an excellent introduction. I gratefully acknowledge lesser debts to Miss Mackinnon's "Philosophical Writings of Henry More," "An Introduction to Cudworth's Treatise," by W. R. Smith, Westcott's essay on Whichcote, Mr. E. A. George's "Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude," Professor Sorley's "History of English Philosophy," an article on the Cambridge Platonists by Dr. Stewart in Hastings' "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics," an article entitled "Ethics" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and two articles by Dr. Muirhead which appeared in the April and June 1927 issues of "Mind." Dr. Inge's Hulsean lectures have been a most valuable pointer throughout. Archdeacon Darbyshire of Sheffield has very kindly allowed me to use freely some unpublished papers of his. Finally, I owe far more than I can express to Dr. Nairne for his lectures in Cambridge, for many friendly conversations, for loans of books and private note-books, and for letters of advice and encouragement. By the courtesy of the electors I have been allowed to add the epilogue since the Hulsean prize was awarded me.

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Foreword

AMBITION has produced some brilliant academic exercises, and sometimes the success may have started the adventurer on a life-long course of special study. Sometimes a well-set theme attracts a candidate who has already spent time and thought upon the subject. From such a happy coincidence a piece of work may emerge, joyous rather than brilliant, but sincere and (so to say) touched with affection. And it will grow to real value if publication be deliberate ; if the author broods, corrects, prunes, completes, filling up as far as he can deficiencies of which he is himself scrupulously conscious.

That has been the process of this book's existence. The author had read the Cambridge Platonists and thought upon their charm. Trained first in the faculty of arts, he came to divinity like the Cambridge Platonists, " a Greek in the Temple." The Hulsean Essay for 1926 offered a kindly invitation. He started upon it with concentrated diligence and won the prize. Then misgivings. He kept it three years by him, occupied meanwhile in the service of his parish and drawing all his cares and studies that way, but pondering his essay still, adding experience of men to experience of books, retouching the manuscript in leisure hours. He learned, like Whichcote, how to make business an aid to plain philosophy, to get more by studying a few than by reading many books, and to get much too by converse with friends and by carefulness in his own duties of teaching.

By degrees he found that shaping rather than correcting was what the essay required. Two or three particular problems haunted it all through. In these problems, not in repetition of the familiar story, lay the fresh interest. The story had indeed to be told and the characters delineated ; the perennial romance of this bit of history, unaffectedly presented, must be the transparency. But in its own trans-

parency the story had so to be proportioned and set out as to indicate these problems and point to appropriate solutions.

This question especially intrigued him: What is the origin of the Christian faith—Judaic or world-wide? Can the whole development of the New Testament be explained as issuing from the Old Testament and the Jewish Church; or may one true religion be recognised through all ages and all nations in the trust and yearnings of all simple souls? Is this the Johannine issue of the New Testament's stream of faith? And is this to be discerned in the Galilean gospel itself, in the mind of the Lord Jesus during "the days of His flesh"? Is that gospel-spring itself fed from secret sources that have been wandering through all the recesses of all time? And how is this intimacy of all good men with the heavenly Father related to the Reason to which the Cambridge Platonists recalled mankind, and which made their own good-will so serene? There are signs of the times which show this to be an insistent question to-day. It is only superficially a question of origins: in fact, it is a question of essence.

The last chapter of the essay here printed brings this and other problems into view. That last chapter is the author's final addition to his earlier draught. It expresses his intention as it simplified itself after three years of quiet thought and (as it were) impersonal waiting for "the idea to descend." The idea is of the problems, not of their solution.

This is an uncommonly modest book. It is not written to instruct. It is no handbook to the study of the Cambridge Platonists. There are many small and good books of that kind, and there would be little use in putting forth another. This is a companion for fellow-disciples in the school of Whichcote and Worthington, not didactic, not compendious, but of good conversation.

ALEXANDER NAIRNE.

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The Cambridge Platonists

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

" A GOOD mind and a good life "—this is the key to the position of the Cambridge Platonists. It might also be the motto for an essay on Socrates. " Platonism," it has been said, " was not merely a philosophy, it was a religion " : a religion formed on conventional lines—a human founder and example, with a spiritual aim and moving force. The specific contributions of Socrates to Platonism are uncertain. They were perhaps two : the principle that virtue is knowledge, and the theory of concepts. But the life and death of Socrates were the inspiration of Plato's philosophy. It might be argued that the results of the Socratic dialectic were almost entirely negative : that in the dialogues it is Socrates, faithfully portrayed, who discomfits opponents, but that Plato himself supplies the *dénouement*, the positive part, by a myth or an exhortation to the Gospel of Idealism ; that Socrates claimed the wisdom only of knowing that he knew nothing. But Socrates' search for Truth had as its object the formation of a principle of living, and the story of his life shows that the search was not fruitless. He learnt at least the worthlessness of public opinion, the superiority of conscience's dictate over the command of upstart oligarchs, and the folly of prolonging mortal life at the cost of those immortal principles which should guide it. Knowledge

was the means, virtue the end, for Socrates. And Plato never loses sight of the relation of his argument to ethics. The True and the Beautiful always find their justification in being identified with the Good.

Plato has been studied and admired from many angles. It was as an ethical teacher, no doubt, that he appealed most to Whichcote. Not that there is any evidence, either in Whichcote's own discourses or in the few contemporary mentions of him, that he was a close student of Plato; though Burnet says that "he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers, chiefly Plato, Tully and Plotin." But he was a Platonist in the broad sense that Dr. Inge distinguishes from "traditional Platonism." His ethics, like Plato's, were based on reason as far as reason would take him. Like Plato, he began all reasoning from a faith in absolute and unquestionable standards, which transcend reason. He was "the Socrates of the movement" because he preferred to talk amid a crowd of young men rather than to publish treatises, and because his example was as powerful as his precept—a man "of free conversation."

Platonism influenced all schools of thought in the decaying Greek world. Dr. Inge has shown that the Platonic type of thought passed into Christianity, that from St. John and St. Paul there is a continuous tradition of Christian Platonism. The Neoplatonists emphasised the mystical side of Platonism. The Alexandrian fathers balanced mysticism with a spirit of free inquiry, which also they derived ultimately from Plato. Platonism was naturally more dominant in the Eastern than in the Western branch of the Church; but Augustine had been a Neoplatonist before he became a Christian, and his idea of the "civitas caelesta" as the archetype of the "civitas terrena," with much else of his system, is Platonic. Unfortunately he read Plato in Latin. "The School of Plato ended by being completely dominant in the last age of classical

antiquity," says Dr. Inge. Thence he traces its survival in the respect paid by the mediævals to the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius, and in individuals such as Erigena. Mysticism he finds in Bonaventura, Albert Magnus, Aquinas, Hugo, Richard of St. Victor ; but Erigena is most honourably mentioned, for in him alone philosophical speculation was not subordinate to ecclesiastical dogma. The revived study of Plato at the Renaissance, which overflowed from the Florentine Academy of Ficino, Plethon, and Bessarion, and which was patronised by popes and cardinals, was the voice in the wilderness which prepared the way for the Reformation. The questioning spirit of rationalism mated with the mysticism of such societies as the *Gottesfreunde* to propagate German Protestantism. Luther translated the "Theologia Germanica." In England, too, the study of Greek humanism had arrived just in time to give the Reformation a surer basis than the matrimonial caprices of Henry VIII.

The mysticism of Plato was the acknowledgment of an eternal, invisible world, which encircled and accounted for the things of sense. That and the right to ask questions, which philosophy in general claims as the prerogative of rational beings, were the main contributions of Plato to the Christian Church. Reason is championed most by Whichcote and Culverwel of the Cambridge Platonists. Mysticism is most attractively presented in John Smith's sermons. By More and his followers mysticism is often distorted.

And now, after an attempt to link up these men with Christian thought of preceding ages, it is necessary to examine their affinities to and differences from schools of thought in England. Platonism is often allied with an attitude of protest. As Socrates set himself to preach a new message in an alien atmosphere, and as the Platonic spirit was partly responsible for Protestant cleavages from Rome, so Whichcote attacked the barren dogmatism of the Calvinists. Men of all nationalities

studied at Geneva, whence Englishmen brought home a narrow intensity which was almost fanaticism. The authority of the Bible, as expounded by Calvin, was as absolute and infallible to them as papal decrees were to Ultramontanists. Nothing was held even lawful which Scripture did not expressly authorise. It was an age of religious enthusiasm. Charity was forgotten, while controversies about orthodoxy burned fiercely. The relatively small number of extreme Calvinists in England was compensated by their irrepressible bellicosity.

Whichcote was undergraduate and afterwards tutor at Emmanuel College, a Puritan stronghold in Cambridge. Smith, Culverwel, and Worthington were his pupils there. More was the son of a Puritan squire. But all of them favoured a policy of comprehension. More, at any rate, had this temper early. He himself tells that "on a certain day in a ground belonging to Eton College, where the boys used to play and exercise themselves, musing concerning these things with myself, and recalling to my mind this doctrine of Calvin (*viz. Predestination*), I did thus seriously and deliberately conclude within myself: If I am one of those that are predestined unto Hell, where all things are full of nothing but cursing and blasphemy, yet will I behave myself there patiently and submissively towards God; and if there be any one thing more than another that is acceptable to Him, that will I set myself to do with a sincere heart and to the utmost of my power: being certainly persuaded that, if I thus demeaned myself, He would hardly keep me long in that place." [1]

In More's case tolerance did not reach to Papists. The Pope is described in the "Divine Dialogues" as Antichrist, or "the Man of Sin," Rome as "the Whore of Babylon." This contrasts unfavourably with the generous words of Sir Thomas Browne, More's con-

[1] From his Preface to the edition in Latin of his collected works.

temporary: "We have reformed from them, not against them: for, omitting those improperations and terms of scurrility betwixt us, which only difference our affections, and not our cause, there is between us one common name and appellation, one faith and necessary body of principles common to us both; and therefore I am not scrupulous to converse and live with them, to enter their churches in defect of ours, and either pray with them or for them . . . I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell without an elevation, or think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all—that is, in silence and dumb contempt." But the commoner attitude of More deserves sympathy in view of the fact that the persecutions of Mary's reign, the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, and the Gunpowder Plot were living memories. The Inquisition was still a bogy; and national independence, it was feared, could only stand with the national Church.

When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, reunion of the Churches of England and Rome was still a possibility. But the Queen soon showed herself more disposed to further national unity, both general and religious. The Prayer Book of 1559 aimed at comprehension, an ideal which displeased all parties alike and was hardly even understood. Puritans tried and failed to effect a Calvinistic revolution through the House of Commons. The High Church party was contented at first to remain on the defensive, but nevertheless its influence grew. In Lancelot Andrewes it put forth a noble ornament, and in Hooker a sturdy champion. Comprehension was demonstrated in "The Ecclesiastical Polity" as logical and even necessary. In Dryden's words, Hooker appeared as "a knight of romance among caitiff brawlers." His position is not that of the Laudian clergy. He could not be exclusively claimed by any of the Anglican parties, either in his own or in our day. He established the Church's

authority on the threefold basis of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.

In the desire to comprehend, the Cambridge Platonists are his successors. While accepting all three of his principles, in view of present neglect they stressed most the authority of Reason. Hooker's view of authority in the Church is this : " What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due ; the next whereunto is, whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of Reason ; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth." That is to say, he acknowledges as of first importance that which for Calvinists was the only authority ; places third what in effect had sole authority among Romanists ; and makes Reason the peculiar contribution of himself as representing the Church of England. Reason collects, interprets, and supplements Scripture and the laws of Nature, which God had previously given. Revelation is absolute : but it never contradicts Reason, and is not self-sufficient. Tradition he defends on the plea that in the interpretation of Revelation and the exercise of Reason " two are better than one." Hooker anticipates the Cambridge School also in pronouncing morality absolute and immutable, being founded on natural, in contrast to positive, law. Again, his dictum, " extreme contrariety is not right," is the substance of Whichcote's more trenchant " Enthusiastic doctrines—good things strained out of their wits," and of Cudworth's address to the House of Commons.

Laud is not a favourite with the historians, but deserves more sympathy than he generally is allowed. His policy of enforcing strict uniformity of worship, and the vigorous measures which he enlisted in its service, could not have been approved by those who were nicknamed " Latitude men." But even if they had not flourished at and after the time of his imprisonment and execution, when his party was at its nadir, they could never have felt as hostile to him as to divines

whose position and temper were coloured by the Westminster Assembly. As the reward of outward uniformity Laud allowed large freedom of opinion. While proclaiming the English Church primitive, scriptural, and catholic, he recognised that its doors were open to new knowledge and thought. He maintained that it was unnecessary to require assent to any but fundamental articles of faith, and that "the Church of England never asserted that every one of her articles are fundamental in the faith." His school and the Cambridge Platonists took up positions not far apart on the same *via media* between the two infallibilities, Rome and Geneva. Laud's critics often forget that he patronised such men as Hales and Chillingworth, whose names are more conspicuous in the pedigree of Cambridge latitudinarianism. Chillingworth's position with regard to authority was in the main the same as Laud's: that only to the fundamental articles of faith is assent to be required. But he was less impressed than Laud with the importance of a *consensus antiquitatis* and the practical advantages of submission to authority. Naturally fond of controversy, at which he was marvellously adept, he sought to ransom Reason from all bondage to human authority. The Bible, in his opinion, was the only external force which could compel the intellect equally with the laws of Nature. The realisation that acceptance of this position would result in much diversity of belief by no means daunted Chillingworth. "God," said he, "will not damn men for misinterpreting dark sayings." Only He requires an open and honest mind. "That may be fundamental and necessary to me which to another is not so." And Whichcote seems to echo the words: "Ignorance of that will not destroy another, the knowledge of which will not save me." Both men agree in advocating that Christians should emphasise points of agreement, not of difference; and should join in a common life and worship. The root of schism, thinks Chillingworth, is

" the deifying our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them upon others." Christ and the Apostles left the Word of God " broad and general," the human understanding free. " Require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but Him only." " There are some controversies which will end when the world ends, and that is time enough."

When Chillingworth was engaged in writing " The Religion of the Protestants " he sought Hales' opinion on the question of schism. The two men were very different in temperament, but in position similar. Hales deplored as much as Chillingworth insistence on non-essentials. He gave the same high dignity to Reason. Heresy he defined as " an act of the will, not of the Reason . . . a lie, not a mistake." He was opposed to Laud in desiring simplicity of worship ; to the Puritans in deprecating hard dogmatism. " Infallibility," he held, " is not a favour impropriated to any one man, it is a duty alike expected at the hands of all ; all must have it." He could see good both in Calvinism and Arminianism : " on the one part," he says, " doubtless it is a pious intent to endeavour to free God from all imputation of unnecessary rigour ; and on the other side, it is a noble resolution to humble ourselves under the hand of Almighty God." Like the Cambridge Platonists, he recognised that there were Christians living in the world before the Incarnation. " The crown of martyrdom," he writes, " fits not only the heads of those who have lost their lives rather than they would cease to profess the name of Christ, but on the head of everyone that suffers for the testimony of a good conscience and for righteousness' sake." Mr. E. A. George, in his " Seventeenth-Century Men of Latitude," quotes from a beautiful prayer for reunion, with which Hales concluded his sermon on the text, " Peace I leave unto you."

Taylor, Browne, Falkland, and Stillingfleet are other seventeenth-century upholders of religious

comprehension. There is not space to spare except for a mere mention of them, and enough has already been said to show that the Cambridge Platonists do not stand alone in their age in adherence to the ideal of ecclesiastical comprehension. It is now time to consider in more detail the lives and thought of the greatest of them.

CHAPTER II

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE

"THE first notes of the new music" were heard in 1641, says Bass Mullinger—the "Commonplaces" of John Sherman, which, according to Dr. Nairne, contain "three main points of the Cambridge doctrine: the light of the Gentiles, the goodness of nature, the divinity of Reason." By that year, however, Whichcote had already been tutor at Emmanuel for eight years, and for four had been delivering his weekly lectures at Trinity Church. In 1636 Hales' "Schism and Schismatics" appeared, and two years later Chillingworth's "The Religion of the Protestants." "Religio Medici" was published the year in which the Civil War began.

"Whichcote was a man of a rare temper; very mild and obliging," Dr. Burnet tells us. He taught Christianity "as a doctrine sent from God both to elevate and sweeten human nature; in which he was a great example as well as a wise and kind instructor." This, and his eloquence as a preacher, and the soothing comfort of his gospel were doubtless the secrets of his influence. See him portrayed in a window of Emmanuel College chapel. His favourite text is inscribed there: "Lucerna Dei Spiritus Hominis." Cambridge lay under the dead hand of scholasticism when he began to teach. Education, he complained, was thought to consist chiefly of memory-training. An appetite for wisdom had to sate itself with "an asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles"

(Milton's words). Bacon's "Novum Organum" was published in 1620; but his philosophy did not reach the University, or made no impression there, for many years. Descartes' influence belongs to the second half of the century. (It is reported that John Smith introduced Cartesianism into Cambridge.) There was little to encourage Whichcote when he claimed the liberty of prophesying. Though his extempore sermons were full of fire, he seems to have had an unfailing fund of patience, courtesy, and consideration for others. His letters to Tuckney—we shall return to them—are a model of what controversy should be. How well they would look side by side with some of the letters which divines in recent years have written against each other and published in the press! There is no adequate biography of Whichcote, and he himself gave nothing for publication. But some of his collected aphorisms, we may believe, reflect his own character:

"Nothing spoils human nature more than false zeal. The good-nature of an heathen is more God-like than the furious zeal of a Christian."

"He that is full of himself goes out of company as wise as he came in."

"Fair construction and courteous behaviour are the greatest charity."

"How much easier is it quietly to enjoy, than eagerly to contest! How vastly wiser!"

"By candid construction you may frustrate an enemy; but by sinister construction you may lose a friend."

"Whosoever scornfully uses any other man disparages himself."

"Rudeness, or lightness, levels persons of the greatest distinction and difference."

Benjamin Whichcote, the son of a Shropshire gentleman, was born in 1609. He entered Emmanuel

College in 1626. First Tuckney, and then Thomas Hill, were his tutors. His own tutorship began in 1632 ; his Sunday lectures, which were continued for more than twenty years, began in 1636, the year in which he was ordained deacon and priest. The lectures attracted large congregations of enthusiastic hearers, chiefly undergraduates and the younger masters of arts. He was a most forceful preacher. In 1643 he received the College living of North Cadbury, in Somerset, which Cudworth held later. The following year he became Provost of King's College. His predecessor, Collins, was ejected, as were many other Royalists this year, for refusing to sign the Covenant. Whichcote himself never signed. Perhaps the leniency with which he and others of the School were treated during the Puritan ascendency was due to the good offices of Peter Sterry, Cromwell's chaplain. Sterry was a scholar and a lover of the arts. In sermons he upbraided the narrower Puritans for their contempt of learning. He held the censorship of the press in his function of chaplain to Parliament, and connived at the publication of some books explicitly royalist in sympathy. Sterry's window in Emmanuel Chapel is close to Whichcote's.

It was with great reluctance that Whichcote consented to fill Collins' place. He resigned to him half the emoluments of the office. The Fellows of King's thoroughly appreciated their new head, who was able to protect them to some extent from the civil powers. At the Restoration Whichcote was turned out in spite of the pleadings of Collins. But the King compensated him with the living of St. Anne's, Blackfriars. His church was demolished in the Great Fire, 1666. For two years he was in retirement at Milton, which living he had previously held as a sinecure. Then he succeeded Wilkins at the Church of St. Lawrence, Jewry. In 1683, while on a visit to Cudworth, Master of Christ's, he died. Tillotson preached his funeral

sermon, giving some account of Whichcote's life. A treatise by Whichcote was published in 1693, and another—on devotion—in 1697. Neither is extant. The third Earl of Shaftesbury collected two volumes of Whichcote's sermons, and gave them to the publisher in 1698. These had been preached from meagre notes, but some of his hearers took them down in full. The editor says that he has had to adapt them somewhat owing to the untrustworthiness of his sources; but has given the mind, and generally the words, of the preacher. Other editions of Whichcote's discourses, and collections of his aphorisms, were produced in the eighteenth century. Dr. Jeffery prefixed an apologia and appended a long prayer—the latter being a mosaic of Whichcote's own sentences—to the first edition of the aphorisms. Dr. Salter, another editor of them and Jeffery's grandson, published also the correspondence between Whichcote and Tuckney. He wrote a short but admirable life of Whichcote for his book.

The new teaching was discussed everywhere in Cambridge. While it found many ardent supporters, as has been said, some of the senior members of the University, among them Antony Tuckney, Master of Emmanuel, Thomas Hill, Master of Trinity, and Arrowsmith, Master of St. John's, were rudely shaken by it. All these three men were friends of Whichcote. Anxiety gave way to distinct disapproval, as the Trinity Church sermons made his position increasingly clearer. Tuckney's first letter of protest was sent after Whichcote's commencement sermon in 1651. His respect and affection for his former pupil were unchanged, but he could not bear with his freedom. Tuckney and Whichcote each wrote four letters, and the series is a complete enough guide to their different points of view.

Tuckney first complains of Whichcote's statements concerning the ambiguity of Scripture; of his asser-

tion that every man has liberty to interpret the Bible for himself, and that contrary explanations need not divide men; of his treatment of reconciliation as being of man to God, not of God to man (this alone accords with Biblical language, though the second Article of our Prayer Book, following the Confession of Augsburg, states that Christ "reconciles his Father to us"); lastly, of Whichcote's phrase, "divinest Reason." This last point is at the bottom of all Tuckney's disquietude. He refused to regard Reason as the Word of God. Whichcote's last letter is almost wholly taken up with the defence of Reason. His first reply is cautious—all eight letters are courteous—as though an understanding was yet possible. Even the heathen, he said, had a spark of the Λόγος, a partial revelation. Divergences as to the meaning of ambiguous passages of Scripture are a fact among good men, although there is substantial agreement. He defends the freedom of the intellect. The small matter of the correct explanation of the doctrine of reconciliation can easily be dismissed: God is always desiring reconciliation, so that it rests with us to effect it.

In his second letter, which is very friendly, Tuckney first fastens upon Whichcote's favourite text, "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. xx, 27). He admits that "when faith acts, reason acts also"; but, says he, "what we know we owe to Reason, what we believe we owe to Authority." "Substantial agreement of good men"—this is a doubtful phrase. No word can alter Scripture, and to expound it is the prerogative of synods and councils. Whichcote must have been dabbling in the writings of Socinians and Arminians. Tuckney reprobates "such large charity." He even writes—and unfortunately there are many historical precedents for his view—"when heretics of old and divers of late times have been sober and temperate—*nec sine larva summae pietatis*—I think

we should look rather to their doctrines than to their persons." Whichcote's opinion is surely the right one: "the maintenance of truth is rather God's charge, and the continuance of charity ours." Tuckney is almost satisfied with the fuller exposition of reconciliation, but he thinks the phrase "nascitur a nobis" is very dangerous. Finally, he deplores his friend's tendency to philosophy and speculation, reproaching him for his "Platonic faith." Whichcote writes back that he grants the reality of Revelation; but the Reason of the subject is the necessary complement of the Reason of the object. Man's Reason is apprehensive, perceiving what an object is of itself, but not giving it its meaning. He believes, as does Tuckney, in the transcendency of God, but "in amplitudine et plenitudine dati." Holy Scripture "vindicates its own credibility," and is a sufficient rule of the faith which is necessary to salvation. But let every one be fully persuaded in his own sense of it; "for you cannot force faith." As for the accusation of Arminianism, he had never before heard of Episcopius' "Apologia," which Tuckney mentioned. In truth he was half ashamed to confess how little he had read: "for ten years nothing at all"; and before that his rule about books had been "not to read many, but to study a few." Prov. xx, 27, is "a deeper phrase than you allow." And the philosophers, as far as they go, are good guides. He had no cause to repent of his study of them.

Tuckney wrote his third letter still calmly. They are striving for truth, he says, not victory. He believes in something more than bare circumstances, something supernatural behind them, which can miraculously transform their very nature. There have been good heathen, but they "lacked miracles to ratify them." "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" only in the search for secular knowledge. He is surprised that Whichcote had not read the

"Apologia Remonstrantium," which "we so greedily bought and read." (All High Churchmen were suspected of following Arminius and Episcopius.) Now he rebukes him for not reading more. He suggests that Hooker and Chillingworth have had an evil influence on his mind. Whichcote's answer advises that the correspondence should end soon. He asserts his full belief in the Holy Spirit's guidance of individuals, and on that basis he explains "the candle of the Lord." A man *cannot* believe against his own reason. Yet "I oppose not rational to spiritual," he says, "for spiritual is most rational." He sets forth the nobility of man, as indwelt by Christ.

The last two letters are brief. Hope of spanning the dividing gulf had been abandoned, at least for a time. Their friendship remained. What slight concessions had been made were in Whichcote's favour; but when two men argue about the trustworthiness of Reason itself, using the weapon of logic, the result can hardly be doubtful.

Rationalism was not a new idea, not an original discovery made by Whichcote; but it had never before been so well championed openly in Cambridge, and a complete understanding of his case is necessary to an appreciation of the more peculiar points of his religious philosophy. There is, he taught, an order and method planted by God in the external universe—"the Reason in things"; and there is in man a similar "deiform seed" which may apprehend. God's purpose for the world is harmony, which can be achieved only by men submitting to the Reason in things. "The rule of right is the Reason of things; the judgment of right is the Reason of our minds perceiving the Reason of things." "To go against Reason is to go against God." Certain principles are congenital with man's mind—"the truths of first inscription" Whichcote calls them. Others are to be deduced by the exercise of Reason. The whole

business of man's life is to search out Truth in himself, in Nature, and in Scripture, and to live as he sees cause to live. Habits must be formed. "The principles of our religion" must become "the complexion of our minds." We must "practise according to our right apprehensions of things, till it becomes easy and delightful to us." "When the principles of our religion become the temper of our spirits, then we are truly religious."

Knowledge, Whichcote thinks, is an important factor in ethics: "knowledge doth not amount to virtue; but certainly there is no virtue without knowledge." Reason always is not, but always should be the controlling force of intellectual natures, as power is of inferior creatures. Vice is unnatural, virtue connatural to man. To do what is right is to live according to the nature of our beings. He asserts what Cudworth tried to prove, that moral laws are fixed and unalterable, a part of the very nature of God. Man is so made that, if he faces those laws with an open mind, he cannot but accept them. It is the moral part of religion which matters. "All else is about religion,"—"in order to this," he says. With this principle in mind he forms his estimate of the religion of his day, and his idea of the Church. He saw professing Christians wholly engrossed in doctrinal contentions; and he unearthed that text of St. John, "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." "There is nothing," he maintains, "more unnatural to religion than contentions about it." "Our fallibility and the shortness of our knowledge should make us peaceable and gentle: because I may be mistaken, I must not be dogmatical and confident, peremptory and imperious. I will not break the certain laws of charity for a doubtful doctrine, or of uncertain truth." "We may maintain the unity of verity, in point of faith; and unity of charity, in point of communion, not-

withstanding all differences in point of apprehension." Whichcote uses the words 'enthusiasm' and 'zeal,' almost always in a bad sense, connecting them both with antinomianism, such as was practised by the Anabaptists, and with the dour unsociableness of English Puritans. "Some men spoil the good nature they are born with by false zeal, and become the worse for their religion." Whichcote's own faith was very simple; and Church unity seemed to him easily securable, if only men would realise that "there is nothing in religion necessary which is uncertain," and that "men can only believe as they see reason," and that "fallibility is a reason for modesty." In a sermon on the text, "our conversation is in heaven," he argues that common sense is not the antithesis of either religion or philosophy. Christ came eating and drinking. Love, joy, peace are as much the fruits of the Spirit as temperance, soberness, and chastity. As for doctrine, good men do not differ on what is necessary, and therefore clear. And "God will bring out of particular error him that is right in the main." First we must work "to establish a right throne of judgment"; then error—the natural consequence of human fallibility, of accidental prejudices of education, temperament, lack of opportunity to seek Truth, of "the darkness of things themselves"—will disappear as the light increases. Men are born not with the whole Truth, but with the potentiality for acquiring it. Some can get nearer than others; so the decision of the expert is to be respected. In any case it is safer to stray "*in errore communi quam proprio*." "It becomes the modesty of particular persons when their sentiments are singular to ask themselves this sober question, How went the Spirit of God from the generality of His worshippers, and determined itself to me?" The preacher's final word on the subject is, that "nothing is desperate in the condition of good men."

What place does Whichcote assign to the authority of Scripture, and how does he interpret it? Hooker had derided Calvinistic bibliolatry; but Whichcote, far ahead of almost every Christian of his time, seems sometimes even to anticipate the "higher criticism." Sir Thomas Browne tells how he had silenced on his knees the difficulties which a close study of the Bible suggested. Browne stops short of believing that Moses wrote the account of his own death, but stifles the suspicion that Sodom was destroyed by natural causes. He believes that there was a tree of knowledge in Eden, though the very chapter of Genesis which tells of it states that the plants of the field were not yet grown. "I can answer," he writes, "all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, 'certum est quia impossibile est.'" Whichcote, however, says that "Scripture as a rule of faith is not one text, but all." It can only bind men where it is "clear and perspicuous." Yet he affirms that it should be the axis of the Church's faith. It should control the body, as well as the member. It is "the light of after-revelation"; and "determinations beyond Scripture have indeed enlarged faith, but lessened charity, and multiplied "divisions." "The written Word of God is not the first or only discovery of the duty of man. It doth gather together, and repeat, and reinforces (*sic*) the scattered and neglected principles of God's creation, that have suffered prejudice and diminution by the defection and apostasy of man, who has abused his nature, and is passed into the contrary spirit." It also, Whichcote admits, adds to natural truth. There is a distinction between the natural and the supernatural, but Reason has a relation to both: "Reason discovers what is natural, and Reason receives what is supernatural." "Scripture," therefore, "is to be taken in a rational sense." "Several forms of words in Scripture express the same state, and so vary only

the notion; and σχέσεις differ not materially, but in substance are the same. To stand upon nice and accurate distinctions of them is needless, useless, since Scripture uses them indifferently. [Regeneration, etc.] . . . Truth lies in a little compass and narrow room. Vitals in religion are few." Hear his almost 'modernist' view of miracles: God does not "pervert the common course of natural agents; to bring the Sun back again, or to make it fill the world with darkness. . . . If He did, He would contest with Himself; His Power would rise up against His Wisdom; and He would disparage and frustrate His own workmanship."

Whichcote's conception of God differs from that of the Calvinists in the prime emphasis which he laid on His Goodness, rather than on His Power. "Wisdom and Power," he says, "are perfections only as they are in conjunction with Justice and Goodness." God is in a sense a constitutional monarch: "the whole world is governed by the perfection of Truth, Righteousness, and Goodness, in conjunction with the perfections of Wisdom and Power; nothing is done by God but what these perfections do." His Nature is comprehensible, His Will is clear. No glory can accrue to the Creator from the disparagement of the creature. Man and God are complementary. The fact that God created is the proof of His Goodness. "God imposeth no law of righteousness upon us, which He Himself doth not observe." On the other hand, "in all moral perfections God is imitable by us." Thus "the height of his Original, and the excellency of His End, represent man as a considerable creature." "God is to us according to our capacity": (hence the God of the Puritans!) "Reverence God in thyself; for God is more in the mind of man than in any part of this world besides." "Nothing is more specific to man than the capacity of religion and sense of God." God never forces, but He is ever ready to

enable. And His aid is essential: "better have no confidence than self-confidence." To worship God is to imitate Him, to serve Him is to exercise Reason for the practice of virtue. From the Incarnation we learn the final truth about the Deity. The belief that Christ was "Divinity in the nature of man," "strengthens our faith that human nature may be conjoined to God eternally." Christ is the Reason of God, ὁ Λόγος, sent to restore the Reason of man which sin had vitiated. Whichcote rejected that theory of the Atonement which the followers of Anselm hold. "It is a wonder," he says, "any should think that might be done by sacrifice, which could not be done by mental devotion. Nothing in sacrifice could be acceptable to God but the meaning of the sacrificer." His language is sometimes outspoken, but he was not lacking in reverence, as two of his most beautiful sayings may serve to show: "There is no Perfection wanting in God, which our hearts could desire should be in Him"; and the one with which Dr. Jeffery concluded his collection of the "Aphorisms": "We ought not to name God without a sense of Him upon our minds."

The meaning of the words 'Heaven' and 'Hell' is a favourite subject of Whichcote. A Platonist does not distinguish the relative from the Absolute primarily in terms of time: "Heaven is first a temper and then a place." The practical questions, What may men be now? How much happiness may they obtain here? were more absorbing to Whichcote than the speculative question, What will they become after death? But since he regarded the whole of life—in which death is just an incident—as a continuous growth, Heaven, here and hereafter, is all one thing. "Every man may estimate his future state by his present, viz. the like, or more of the same. Death makes not that change which is made only by moral principles of knowledge and goodness." It is only the

complete attainment which is not yet. The fullness is reserved for those who taste now. Heaven is both "the sampler and the goal." What is the heavenly temper? "God is the objective Heaven, rectitude is the subjective Heaven," says Whichcote; so that self-resignation and submission to God, "the characteristics of the second Adam," are our spiritual function, the heavenly temper which may attain to the heavenly place. The final goal is the perfection of present experience; it is the unification and culmination of all loves in the Love of God. Here as there Heaven is happiness. The pursuit of virtue is the only way to obtain true happiness. "God's infinite Goodness makes Him completely happy: the degree of our happiness holds proportion to the measure of our goodness." There must be something of other-worldliness in our lives, not through an unnatural mortification of our bodies, not through forbearing "the use . . . of what is naturally good," but through that 'mental asceticism' which, according to Dr. Inge, is a characteristic of Platonism. We must replace "the democracy of passions" or "anarchy of humours" with "the monarchy of Reason." We must trust things rather than men. "Serenity of mind and calmness of thought are a better enjoyment than anything without us." What could be more Platonic than Whichcote's faith that "heavenly things are the greatest truths and realities in the world; and our life is in them"?

He seldom mentions Hell. Perhaps he heard too much of it from other preachers, in the type of sermons which persuades not the heart because it illuminates not the head. Sometimes his discourses contain a few sentences which amount just to this: "I have told you what Heaven is. The inference as to Hell is surely obvious." "The guilt of conscience is the fuel of Hell." It need not be feared by genuine Christians; for "Justice in God imports not an absolute neces-

sity of punishment." The rationality of Christian doctrine, "if settled in the hearts and lives of men, would make this world resemble Heaven, whereas now the contrary speaks Hell broken loose." Mark the word, 'now.' It was a robust faith which could believe in, a saintly life which could experience, Heaven upon earth in the days of Puritan domination.

It is a curious thing, and a testimony to the earnestness and sweetness of character of their author, that out of a thousand aphorisms only about half a dozen have that twinge of irony or cynicism which is the making of the modern *bon mot*. Of these few some find their way into almost all modern selections—a significant fact. The most popular one seems to be: "Among politicians the esteem of religion is profitable, the principles of it are troublesome." Others are:

"Take away the self-conceited, and there will be elbow-room in the world."

"Some run abroad to fetch nothing home: some are so ever a-doing, that nothing is done: some cannot do for want of thinking, and cannot think for thinking."

"Among Christians those that pretend to be inspired seem to be mad: among the Turks those that are mad are thought to be inspired."

"Men have an itch rather to make religion than to use it."

They give proof that Whichcote had a sense of humour in spite of the atmosphere around him. But he preferred to use a ready tongue as a gentle goad, rather than as a stinging lash.

In his last days "he expressed great doubts of the principles of separation, and said that he was the more desirous to receive the Sacrament, that he might declare his full communion with the Church all the world over." [1] This is the answer to Dr. Westcott's

[1] From Burnet's *History of My Own Times*.

criticism that Whichcote had "an imperfect conception of the corporate character of the Church." He was ready to embrace all that was in the fullest sense Catholic. But he hated the tendency to enlarge faith at the expense of charity. A man of thought, he sought only that knowledge, and assented only to that faith which can issue in action. "I act, therefore I am," was his transformation of Descartes' famous dictum. He welcomed Truth from all quarters, and in conforming with it found perfect freedom.

CHAPTER III

John Smith

John Smith is a more shadowy figure than Whichcote. He was born in 1618, a native of Northamptonshire, and died at the age of thirty-four. There is no contemporary biography of him, but the panegyric which Simon Patrick delivered at his funeral gives his character in terms of unmeasured praise. He was a great scholar, and a model of good living. In his own writings there is nothing intimate to compare with Whichcote's letters to Tuckney, or with Worthington's diary. He entered Emmanuel College in 1636—that is, three years after Culverwel—and was a pupil of Whichcote. The great debt that Smith owed his tutor is evident from his ten posthumous discourses. "Verbal resemblances are not uncommon," says Mr. Campagnac. They are, indeed, hardly absent from a single page. Like Whichcote, he was a very able teacher, and loved to teach. Unlike Whichcote, he read very widely, so that Patrick calls him "a living library," "a walking study." In 1644 he became a Fellow of Queens' College. (He was not eligible for a fellowship at his own college on account of a rule that two natives of the same county could not be fellows at the same time. Culverwel, also of Northamptonshire, had been appointed before Smith had qualified for the M.A. degree.) However much of Patrick's funeral sermon must be discounted as the extravagance of friendship, there can be no doubt that John Smith at his death had already won

love and respect from those around him; for his intellect was pregnant with virtue.

Whichcote may be absolved from Tuckney's charge that he had read too much from the philosophers, but it is tempting to transfer the taunt to Smith. To say that his works "bear the traces of library dust" is most cautious criticism. At a first hasty reading of them it almost looked as if his principle was that apt quotation is as good as proof. But a sympathetic reader will pass lightly over the clauses, "as Tully says," "as Origen speaks," "as Plotinus phraseth it"; for what Smith borrowed he made his own, using another's words only to clothe his own fervent convictions. His Alexandrine display of learning, and his arguments from *consensus gentium*, were perhaps sops to the conventions of seventeenth-century literature. Certainly they were no substitute for original genius. He made no man's system his shroud. He himself warns against an immature condemnation of or compliance with the creeds of other men. He saw the danger of the glamour of the written word: "They are not always the best men that blot most paper." "Some men have too bad hearts to have good heads." There are the "idola specus" and the "idola fori" ever present as false landmarks. And in appealing to *consensus gentium* he does not altogether forget Whichcote's canon, that the most voices are a false measure of truth. "This *consensus gentium*," he says, "Tully thinks enough to conclude a law and maxim of nature by; which though I should not universally grant, seeing sometimes error and superstition may strongly plead this argument, yet I think that for those things that are the matter of our just belief, that notion may not be refused." There are innate truths stamped on human minds of every race. Among such truths Smith reckoned the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Error, he thought, proceeds from wilful blind-

ness to first truths, or from deductions vitiated by prejudices.

Taking the plain, practical philosophy of Whichcote, Smith set out to elaborate it into a comprehensive system. He stands in a relation to his master similar to that of Plotinus to Plato. Plato, Plotinus, and Proclus are quoted more often than the Bible by him to illustrate Christian life and teaching. He only hesitated to endorse their opinions when these seemed to conflict with orthodoxy, as did the theory of the eternity of matter. It is their spiritual interpretation of life and reality as a whole that chiefly attracted him in the Platonists, says Professor Sorley. His assessment of Stoicism was that it is on right lines, but does not go far enough. The doctrine of a world-soul he liked; but ἀπάθεια and αὐτάρκεια appeared to him virtually to deny the reality of the world and the flesh. On the other hand, Aristotle and Epicureanism were abomination to him. He knew the "De Rerum Natura" from end to end. The modern estimate of Lucretius is that he is the most religious of Latin poets: to John Smith he was the Beelzebub of atheism. Smith is said to have introduced the Cartesian philosophy into Cambridge, but the relation of the Cambridge Platonists to Descartes will be made more apparent in dealing with More and Cudworth. Smith was a forerunner of the modern movement for the revival of Greek, in the place of Latin, theology; he endeavoured to bring back the Church to a faith in the revelation of the Word according to St. John and Clement and Origen.

Above all it was "a moral divinity" that he taught. The creed is only incidental to the life. The life covers everything. "We have learned," he says, "to distinguish too subtly . . . *inter sacrum et profanum.*" As a philosopher he sought to unify, to fill in the seeming chasms which intersect reality, to co-ordinate belief and practice, death and immortality, the human

soul and God. Christianity is a living power, a process of sanctification. In our own souls is "an urim and thummim by which we may ask counsel of God Himself." Whichcote spoke much of Reason. Smith analysed Reason, and thickly delineated its limits. The finite Reason of man, he found, cannot comprehend the eternal Reason in things. As Whichcote said, "things are greater than we." "Every art and science must start with certain praecognita," and the ultimate basis of belief in divinity and immortality is not speculation but sensation, not logic but an "intellectual touch." "Taste and see," "handle and touch": that is the only way to know.

But Smith's epistemology must have a paragraph to itself. There are four degrees of knowledge (he takes this, of course, from Plato), and the first is that which arises from the senses. They are never deceived, though consequent deductions may be erroneous. The second degree is the collation of sense-impressions. The third is the contribution of Reason, working on the basis of those impressions, and weighing them in the balance of innate truths, which Smith calls 'praecognita' or 'προλήψεις.' The fourth is "naked intuition of eternal truth." That knowledge does not come solely through the senses is proved by the facts of our collecting and unifying various sense-impressions, of memory and prevision, of our judgments passed on what we perceive. The mind which receives impressions is not a *tabula rasa*, for there are certain mathematical notions and other archetypal ideas—such as "Justice, Wisdom, Goodness, Truth, Eternity, Omnipotency, and the first principles of Science,"—which could not originate from the contemplation of matter. These "radical principles of knowledge" cannot be obliterated. Sin tends to obscure them; but no man is wholly bad, so that we need never despair of bringing men

to a right understanding. And the only way to accomplish this is to appeal to Reason and "the truths of natural inscription," for "we can never be well assured what our *traditional* divinity is." The truth is that Christ and His disciples never attempted to draw up a system of divine truth, realising that purity of life brings knowledge enough.

"Evil opinions arise from our corporeal life." Smith is a definite ascetic. Man's knowledge and goodness, he thinks, hold proportion to his victory over "this base flesh." He commends the purity tests, to which all desirous of initiation into the Pythagorean Mysteries had to submit. Whatever subject his mind is engaged in, always he keeps recurring to conduct. Clear away "those filthy mists that arise from impure and terrene minds." Mortify the body. To behold God the soul must be God-like, and God is "without body, parts, or passions." There is a danger in the exercise of Reason. "Knowledge puffeth up": only love can edify. Some men "worship Truth only in the image of their own wits." He pours scorn on "mere speculation." No sensual mind can taste or relish the "inward sweetness and deliciousness" of divine Truth. "Our Saviour connexed purity of heart with the Beatificall Vision." In this lies our hope. By purity Reason can be elevated up to spiritual sensation, faith up to spiritual vision. The summit is that "intellectual calmness," when searchings are at an end, and the soul is brought face to face with God.

Corresponding with the four degrees of knowledge there are four grades of men: firstly, the man in whom soul and body are mingled in equal parts; secondly, the man who recognises his soul as ruler; thirdly, he who has purged his soul through virtue; fourthly, "the true metaphysical and contemplative man." (The list does not include "the Epicurean herd of brutish men, who have drowned all their own

sober Reason in the deepest Lethe of sensuality" ; for these can have no true knowledge as they are.) The lowest of the grades, " the complex and multifarious man," lacks clarity of knowledge, since all the opinions of the soul are entwined with sense and sensuality. In Plotinus' language, such men are 'ὀπισθοβαρεῖς,' which Smith translates " heavy-behind." The man in whom soul preponderates and governs is at least in the way of virtue and knowledge. He can be initiated into the lesser and more human mysteries of religion. The third rank—he whose soul is purged by a lower kind of virtue—is capable of true knowledge during those continual periods when the soul has flown off from the body. But there is still constant danger of being overthrown by " spiritual pride " in personal achievements, of being content with the logical, instead of yearning for full participation in the divine life. Smith would agree with the " Theologia Germanica " that all sin is selfishness, be it gross self-indulgence or airy self-conceit. In the ideal man there is no ' I, me, self, mine.' Personality is completely swallowed up in God, the One.

Having shown what is " the true way or method of attaining to divine knowledge," he could advance to an examination of the fundamental tenets of religion. These are three. Two of them—that God is, and that the human soul is immortal—are common to all religions worthy of the name. The third is the specific contribution of Christianity : that through Christ God is communicated to mankind. In his demonstrations Smith has two imaginary opponents before his mind—the superstitious man and the atheist. The latter is the more formidable ; for the soul's immortality and God's existence have no absolute proofs, in so far as syllogisms cannot be found to convince the " man of subtil wit," who obstinately rejects every premiss. In arguing for immortality John Smith can do no more by way of

verbal proof than Plato in the "Phaedo," or Tennyson in "In Memoriam." And More, in the opening chapters of his "Antidote against Atheism," explains at some length that probability is the only kind of demonstration, of which our Reason has experience. In all philosophy there must be an element of faith.

The fundamentals of religion hang together. If God exists, and if He is "a rewarder of them that seek Him," then the reasonable soul must be immortal: if there is a God He is good and just, so that there must be a future life in which He punishes and rewards those who escape their deserts on earth. But if we make it our first task to clear away all doubts concerning the immortality of the soul, as Smith prefers to do, "we can neither leave any room for atheism . . . nor be wholly ignorant what God is: for indeed the chief natural way whereby we can climb up to the understanding of the Deity is by a contemplation of our own souls." In truth the immortality of the soul might be treated as a postulate, because of the *consensus gentium* on the matter. Setting aside this point, however, Smith insists on "an antecedent converse with our own souls," by which we shall learn more of their nature than by any discourse. He asserts, on the authority of the "Timaeus," that "no substantial and indivisible thing ever perished," as Plato inferred from a belief in "the benignity of the Creator." The soul is not corporeal; for motion, sensation, and reason cannot arise from matter. It is capable of true knowledge when it withdraws from all bodily operations. Matter is in perpetual flux. An abiding memory in the soul alone proves it immaterial, and therefore immortal. The soul can act spontaneously, and is independent of the body. It has liberty to choose. Its Reason can control the bodily senses. It has clear and stable ideas of truth. We can know our souls better than our complex and mystifying bodies; for intelligible

being all concentres in a greater Oneness. Multiplicity is "sucked up in a perfect Simplicity." As Plotinus taught that it is the privilege of a few souls to have direct knowledge of their eternity in moments of mystical ecstasy, so Smith reserved for the end of his discourse a "more than mathematical demonstration": "true goodness and virtue begets such a raised sense" of immortality, that logic becomes superfluous. The soul then does not ask, it knows that God's Goodness must ever embrace it, that "its Redeemer lives, and that it shall at last see Him with a pure intellectual eye, which will then be clear and bright, when all that earthly dust, which converse with this mortal body filled it with shall be wiped out."

The last two chapters are an appendix. They were perhaps written in answer to questions raised after a reading of the discourse. Chapter VIII demonstrates that Aristotle, "whom so many take for the great intelligencer of nature, and omniscient oracle of Truth," supports the view that the rational soul is separable from the body and immortal. Smith's contempt towards Aristotle cannot have pleased the majority of his contemporaries at Cambridge. But it is only very grudgingly that he here receives him as an ally. The other objection with which he deals is the close sympathy of soul and body. He does not resolve the difficulty, as might have been expected, by allowing in some sense the resurrection of the body. His Heaven is wholly spiritual. Such sympathy, he says, is necessary to the nature of that complex being, man. But it does not necessitate a belief in identity of essence.

More also wrote on the soul's immortality, and at greater length than Smith. In a discussion on the subject it is related that Dr. Johnson once said: "Dr. Henry More has carried it as far as philosophy can." Smith's discourse is mainly against Epicurus and

Lucretius. More's is against Hobbes. Mr. Bass Mullinger thinks that Smith, if he had lived, might have equalled More in literary excellence and surpassed him in philosophical judgment. He finds Smith's reasoning well condensed, and some of More's conclusions, such as belief in ghosts, unsatisfactory. Smith's style is uneven. He generally begins haltingly, and ends with a flood of genuine eloquence. In metaphysics he is plainly not quite at ease. But when he treats of moral goodness, or the mystical realisation of God, then he writes from the heart. He had a truer conception of Spirit than More had. His definite cleavage of spirit and matter, soul and body, may not be acceptable ; but it is at any rate more intelligible than More's definition of Spirit as " penetrable, indiscerpible (*sic*) extension."

The existence and nature of God, as the nature of the soul, are best discovered by introspection, thinks Smith. " *Intra te quaere Deum.*" For while God has copied His perfections everywhere, only in rational natures could He write His Name so that it might be read. To men He has imparted " an imitation of His own eternal Understanding " ; and we can only think of God " according to the measure and model of our own intellect." Man makes God after His own image : his conception of Deity is the measure of his spiritual capacity. Thoughts of mortality enthral souls. Freed from these they may soar, until they are finally swallowed up in the abyss of Divinity. The spark of God within us also enables us to interpret Him as He subsists in the universe. For " He is that omnipresent life that penetrates all things. . . . The world is in God, rather than God in the world."

A purified understanding first discovers about God that He is the pure and perfect Reason, of which it is itself only an emanation. He is total, not particular Understanding. Whereas our knowledge is deductive and successive, the infinite knowledge of God

comprehends all things directly and at once. Past, present, and future, cause and result are simultaneously and eternally before His mind.

God is also infinite Power. There is in us a will and a power to execute the results of our reasoning and judgment. Our power grows with our gradual emancipation from our bodies : " the more unbodied, the more unbounded." He Who is pure Spirit is the fountain of all power. We only generate : God creates. His Omnipotence is the Demiurge and perpetual Supporter of the universe.

He is almighty Love, both the subject that loves and the object that is loved : ardent and potent, yet calm and serene : without ebbings and flowings—a στάσις, not a κίνησις : satisfied within Himself.

The eternity of God is the converse both of the temporal and of the local. Time is a subjective phenomenon ; the result of change. Smith does not recognise conceptual, only perceptual time. An hour is a moment of conflict, a moment an hour of peace. There can be no succession of moments in Him " with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning." Correspondingly, His omnipresence is to be conceived not as an infinite extension or expanse of essence, but as the corollary of infinite power. Nothing can stray out of its reach. It is neither confined and centred in any one part of the universe, nor extended through the whole, nor excluded from any part. " It is always some material being that contends for space. . . . Bodily beings are great only in bulk, but divine essences in virtue and power."

Smith does not think of God's liberty as a sort of antinomianism, as do the Nominalists. In God, as in us, " reason is the spring of liberty." So He cannot act against those laws which are rooted in His very Nature. Nor can He will Himself to be other than He is.

To summarise, God is in the world, in Christ, in man—immanent. He is not the antithesis of

humanity but its beginning and end. "The whole of this world is nothing but a perpetual contention for true happiness"; for there is in man a restless appetite, satiable only in a higher Being. Our Reason did not cause the appetite: it is due to something more potent, namely, our wills and affections, by which God is better defined to us than by our understandings. "Whensoever we find true Beauty, Love, and Goodness, we may say here or there is God." Serenity is only possible by resting in the changeless One.

The "Discourse on the Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion" is a sequel to the one on "The Existence and Nature of God." It is an answer to the questions: "If God is like that, what is man's relation to Him? How is man to serve Him?" Religion is "no austere, sour, and rigid thing"; "does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind." It is a "vigorous efflux" of God, Who is "the first Truth and primeval Goodness." To be religious is to participate in the divine Nature. Sin and wickedness are "a perfect degeneration from God and those eternal rules of Goodness which are derived from Him." It has been shown what God immutably is. Because He is that, and not just because He commands it, He is to be loved and copied. That we might be able to grow like Him, He stamped upon our hearts the truths of nature. Then, because man fell, God issued the supplementary "truths of divine revelation." Beyond even these He reveals Himself immediately to the regenerate soul. Not only does He enlighten, but, like the sun, He "heats and enlightens." Just as the revelation of Scripture is summed up in Christ, so the direct revelation of God to the individual is the birth of an "Infant Christ" in his heart.

A good man lives above the world. He recognises his body as a tomb, and seeks escape from it. He

" lives in converse with his own reason," and " loves himself," that is, his true self. By degrees he is able to " live above himself in an intimate converse with the Deity " ; not by denying his reason, but by subduing his body. His soul " loves itself in God." It surrenders self-sufficiency for complete dependence on Him. In God all creation " lives and moves and has its being," but only the good man acknowledges this. Religion enlarges and sets free all the faculties of the soul ; gives a man self-mastery ; sets before him the best end, which is the glory of God and assimilation to God. Perhaps with Augustine's famous sentence in his mind, that " God deals with us not as we are, but as we are becoming," Smith says : " a man *is* such as the end he aims at." Absolute Good, not relative or particular good things, must be that end ; not honour or popularity, but the glory of God. And to glorify God—let not fancy deceive—is to bear the fruits of holiness. There need be no " nice distinction " between seeking God's glory and seeking personal salvation. To give is God's glory, to receive is our salvation. God did not create the world " to get Himself some eternal hallelujahs." His love proceeds not from indigency but from redundancy. His glory naturally overflows and communicates itself. Religion is progressive and continuous. " Virtue now, happiness hereafter," is a wrong view of it. " A saving faith is not content to wait for salvation till the world to come . . . no, but it is here perpetually gasping after it." By its fruits is true religion known, and among them are joy and peace. " The foundation of heaven and hell is laid in men's own souls." We cannot gauge the end of religion. But we may be sure that, whereas the greatest bodily happiness is a negative state—ἀταραξία, true spiritual happiness must be something positive and active. Holiness and happiness are " two several notions of one and the same thing."

We are told that the Westminster Assembly approved Smith's appointment to a fellowship at Queens' College. That was in the year that Laud was executed and Whichcote became Provost of King's College. In Smith there is more of the Puritan than in Whichcote, More, or Cudworth. He is not greatly interested in the Sacraments and the marks of the visible Church. Somewhere he says that ritual is among those merely relative things which are best as they conform to us, while we are best as we conform to absolute Truth. We may guess that the spiritual religion which he preached looked frowningly on all but the barest ceremonial, just as his uncompromising moral standards practically excluded all worldly pleasures, and even looked askance perhaps at the man of free conversation whom Whichcote extolled. Certainly Smith's attitude was incompatible with the policy of Laud, which put the accidents of religion in the forefront. On the other hand, he would not mentally prostrate himself before an isolated text of Scripture. He seems to have recognised written revelation as progressive, and, like Hooker, some of the divine ordinances as only temporarily binding. "Divine truth," he says, "becomes many times in Scripture incarnate, debasing itself to assume our rude conceptions, that so it might converse more freely with us, and infuse its own Divinity into us." And again: "Truth is content, when it comes into the world, to wear our mantles, to learn our language, to conform itself, as it were, to our dress and fashions . . . it becomes all things to all men." His moral fervour is Puritanism at its best. To himself even his own philosophy seemed a poor thing. "If we should have asked him . . ." said Patrick, "What is thy art and profession? . . . He would not have answered, 'To be a great philosopher, mathematician, historian, or hebrician, but . . . as he doth there, ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, my art is to be good.'"

CHAPTER IV

HENRY MORE

THE "new philosophy" of Francis Bacon had treated religion as something apart from and above all branches of science, and exempt from scientific inquiry. Cartesianism banished God from His world, and virtually, if not avowedly, rendered religion gratuitous. Hobbism, the most insidious foe of all, paid mock respect to a purely authoritative religion and morality. A school which upheld the divinity of Reason, which applied religion to the whole of life, and considered communion with God its true aim, could not avoid conflict with these contemporary philosophies. Whichcote, it appears, was hardly aware of them. Smith, if philosophy was not his profession, nevertheless showed great aptitude for it; but he did not live long enough to make his mark as a philosopher. From the point of view of a historian of philosophy,[1] More was "the first real Cambridge Platonist." Principal Tulloch estimated him "at once the most typical and the most vital and interesting" of them. More alone was a voluminous writer. He was born only five years after Whichcote, and, except for Cudworth, who died one year after, he lived latest. He corresponded with many of the chief thinkers of the century. His books were widely read both during his life and long after his death. But it must be admitted that his limitations, more than his qualities, or the positions which he held in

[1] Professor Sorley.

common with others of the group, made him popular in his own times.

"They loved the constitution of the Church and the liturgy, and could well live under them: but they did not think it unlawful to live under another form." These words of Burnet apply most fittingly to More. He curried favour with neither of the great ecclesiastical parties when they were in power. Yet he was the most zealous churchman of the school. All through the Cromwellian régime he openly used the Book of Common Prayer, which indicates courage. His relatives and friends were Royalists, and he himself was overjoyed at the Restoration. But he refused to perform a ceremonial act of loyalty to Charles II, fearing this would be rewarded by preferment, for which he was strongly disinclined. Except for a break of two years he remained at Christ's College continuously from the time of his first entry, in 1631, till his death, in 1687. "The Angel of Christ's" he has been called. A lover of quiet and peace, comfortably well off or even wealthy, he desired nothing but freedom to study. Unlike Whichcote and Smith, he was reader rather than teacher, writer rather than preacher. His literary remains are treatises and poems, not sermons. It has been mentioned how he early repudiated his Puritan upbringing.[1] His father, though a Calvinist, was neither a Roundhead nor a bigot. After a short estrangement he came to tolerate and even admire the position which his son had chosen. More the younger addressed the "Epistle Dedicatory" of his "Philosophical Poems" (1647) to his father in terms of affection and respect. He there professes himself a Platonist, and exalts Reason. The volume includes a poem written in Spenserian verse—his father used to read aloud "The Faerie Queene" in More's childhood—which attempts to solve "the riddle of the universe." Dr. Nairne has commended Mr. Massingham's good

[1] See page 12.

taste in including two short specimens of More's poetry in " Seventeenth-Century English Verse."

From his own works, especially his account of his early years which prefaces the collection of Philosophical Works, from Worthington's diary, from the Biography by Richard Ward, who for a time held the living of Ingoldsby of which More was patron, we can piece together the story of his uneventful life. Grantham was his birthplace. He was educated at Eton. Milton was in residence at Christ's College during More's first year there. They sat under the same tutor, but apparently were not well acquainted. More tells us of a " mighty and almost immoderate thirst after knowledge, especially for that which was natural," which possessed him in these days. " I immersed myself over head and ears in the study of philosophy. . . . Aristotle, therefore, Cardan, Julius Scaliger, and other philosophers of the greatest note I very diligently perused " : all these in the " almost four years " before he had taken his degree. His reading so far disappointed him. So he turned next to " the Platonic writers, Marsilius Ficinus, Plotinus himself, Mercurius Trismegistus, and the mystical divines," who confirmed him in the thought that purification of the soul must precede illumination of the mind. Especially did he admire the " Theologia Germanica," with its lesson that our finite wills must be merged in the Will of God. His appetite for knowledge was now succeeded by as strong a hungering after " purity and simplicity of mind " ; and assurance in things which before he had doubted was added unto him. He is probably giving an embellished account of his own experience, when in the " Divine Dialogues " he describes how, to a young man who fell asleep in a wood, Truth was revealed on two scrolls by an old man of reverend aspect.

Here in parenthesis a few words may fitly be said of the Cambridge Platonists as classical scholars.

Theirs was "an age more curious than critical" in study. Smith had a high reputation for scholarship, as has been mentioned. More's mind was packed with promiscuous learning, as is evinced by the many digressions which overload his books. Even his "Divine Dialogues," intended as a popular exposition of his system, have too many of them for modern taste. Classical erudition was as strong in Cudworth, though he wrote Latin less easily than More. A noteworthy position of the school was the belief that the heathen had a share in divine Reason, and that therefore pagan witness may be used in support of Truth. But the acceptance of the Mosaic origin of all that was good in Greek philosophy tended to cancel the debt. Cudworth praised Descartes for reviving in its original purity a theistic Mosaic atomism, which Democritus had perverted into atheism. He traced the origin of atomism to Moschus, a Sidonian, whom he identified with Moses. More in "Coniectura Cabbalistica" refers the theory of the pre-existence of the soul, the discovery of the rotation of the earth on its own axis, and the doctrine of the Trinity, all back to Moses as their author. The Christ's College Platonists attempted to find a Jewish origin for all that they liked in Plato. His poetic passages appealed to them most. The doctrine of eternal Beauty in the "Symposium" and elsewhere was fastened upon by all children of the Renaissance. More had by no means a clear grasp of Platonic thought. "There are reflections in his writings of the arguments of the 'Theætetus,' the 'Parmenides,' and the 'Phædo,' and, most obviously, of the myth of the 'Timæus'; but of the characteristically Platonic method he shows little trace, and the Platonic doctrine of ideas appears only in so far as it influences his argument for the reality of Spirit."[1] Neoplatonic

[1] From the Introduction of Miss Mackinnon's *Philosophical Writings of Henry More.*

mysticism was what Platonism chiefly meant to him. For all this, the School did good service in the cause of sound learning, as it was then understood. Puritan students were obscurantists. Hobbes, though he admired Homer, regarded the Greek philosophers as ignoramuses and charlatans, and wrested Scripture in the most indefensible way to support absolutism. The Cambridge Platonists taught that "it is a narrow view to limit truth to the confines of specific revelation."

There was some hesitation before More was awarded his fellowship. His friends had first to refute the rumour that he was "a melancholy man." On the contrary, he was very fond of entertaining people to a cup of ale, wine, or sack, and a song on the theorbo. His custom of dining in his own room on Fridays was to be condoned on the plea that fish, which would be served in the College hall, did not agree with his stomach. His great friends away from Cambridge were Lord and Lady Conway, with whom he often stayed at Ragley. He dedicated "An Antidote against Atheism" (1652) to Lady Conway, and at her instigation wrote "Coniectura Cabbalistica" (1653), which was dedicated to Cudworth in a preface of extravagant praise. "On the Immortality of the Soul" (1659) was dedicated to Lord Conway. "John Inglesant" contains an account of life at Ragley. It gives a conversation of More with Inglesant, which is a close paraphrase of a passage in that autobiography already mentioned. More dilates on the benefits of fresh air, which strengthens a man's sense of communion with the Deity. The life of God "inactuates" the soul, and "makes her unite with, and after a sort feel herself animate the whole world." Shorthouse writes: "The school to which the Doctor belonged—the Christian Platonists—had no tendency to that exclusive worship of the Person of Jesus, which in some religious schools had almost superseded the worship of God . . . Dr. More's philosophy was

more than a philosophical Deism, into which the person and attributes of Christ entered as a part of an universal scheme, in which the universe, mankind, the all-pervading Spirit of God, and objects of thought and sense, played distinct and conspicuous parts." Shorthouse makes More give a qualified approval of the Quakers, whom Lady Conway finally joined. He puts into his mouth that message, which was paramount to Whichcote, Smith, and Cudworth as to himself: "The oracle of God is not to be heard but in His holy temple, that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul and body." Lady Conway dabbled in many kinds of occult science. Van Helmont[1] and Victor Greatrakes, two quack physicians, were among the strange characters who visited Ragley. With the former More exchanged letters.

From 1666 to 1668 More was in retirement at Ingoldsby, near Grantham. Worthington, whose church in London had been burnt down, held the living at that time. More, however, found life outside Cambridge intolerable. He was disinclined to engage any more in controversy concerning Anglican doctrine. George Rust's challenge—that truth is mere compliance with the current creed, that there is no absolute Truth, that increased liberty of judgment was resulting in increased disunion—was left unanswered. More devoted himself for the remaining twenty years of his life mainly to mystical speculation and the interpretation of prophecy. The Jewish Cabbala and the Apocalypse were loaded with the kind of problems that he loved. He had a great admiration of Mede's "Clavis Apocalyptica." He believed in ghosts, haunted houses, and witchcraft; was convinced that his own body had peculiar and

[1] There is a striking portrait of Van Helmont, and also one of Simon Patrick, both by Sir Peter Lely, in Room XXV of the National Gallery.

mysterious properties, comparable with the healing powers of Greatrakes. More's mind was nimble and could fathom depths, but he was uncritical and superstitious. In his philosophical works he gathered wheat and chaff together into the garner. A critic has censured his precipitancy of judgment in contrast with Cudworth's leisurely deliberation. But More never violated what he conceived to be the reason of the case. "His quest was to discern how the soul might escape from its earthly prison, and acquire its wings to soar to lofty regions of true liberty. . . . He was saved from shipwreck on the shoals of mysticism by his sincerity—what he calls 'monocardia.'" [1] In others he could tolerate anything except intolerance itself and hypocrisy. "It would prevent a great deal of blood and bitterness in the Christian world," he writes, "if we reserved the flower and strength of our zeal for the undoubted truth of God and His immutable righteousness, and were more mildly and modestly affected concerning the traditions and determinations of the elders." He died at his College on September 1, 1687, and was buried in its chapel.

His "True Grounds of the Certainty of Faith" is the right beginning of a study of More's philosophy. The question, On what legitimate presuppositions may knowledge be built? seems to have interested him greatly. He has something to say in answer to it in "An Antidote against Atheism": "I would not be suspected of so much vanity and ostentation, as to be thought I mean to bring no arguments but such as are so convictive, that a man's understanding shall be forced to confess that it is impossible to be otherwise than I have concluded." A man may give full assent or dissent to a proposition, when, to be scrupulously accurate, there is only strong probability for or against it. A stone on Mount Athos in the

[1] Essay by Archdeacon Darbyshire.

form of an altar, ashes on the altar, and in the ashes a human footprint would not be *absolute* proof that a man has been there : but yet no one would deny it. The first requisite in him who would discover Truth—here he echoes Smith—is " moral prudence." The authority of the majority or of the expert, of Scriptural revelation, and of private judgment, all have their places in his scheme. He reconciles the first and the third by maintaining that God, Who is wise and good, does not assist an individual rather than a multitude in the search for Truth ; but a humble-minded man has within himself a touchstone on which to test the popular view. He would no doubt concede also that it is for the experts to state their contending opinions, and the *communis sensus fidelium* to choose from them.

Nothing is true which is repugnant to the divine attributes—Wisdom, Goodness, and the like. Thus, " the certainty of Reason and sense, rightly circumstantiated, must be presupposed " : for God would not delude the senses (if He did all would be uncertain), and Reason is divine. There are natural truths—" κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι "—which are palpably trustworthy even to the wicked. Only a fool would believe revelation, humanly transmitted through many ages, against " solid science " or common notions. A good man *cannot* believe that to be a revelation from God which conflicts with natural truth, or Reason, or morality, or which is subversive of the authority of the State. Moreover, " the certainty of faith cannot be grounded on the infallibility of any Church, particular or universal, that is deprehended actually deceived in anything she proposes as a necessary article of faith." And yet universal tradition, prophecy, and history may be believed if they have the confirmation of Reason and sense. " The Spirit of Life in the new birth, and illuminated Reason " are to corroborate tradition ; and " this is not to be argued, but to be felt." As is stated more

fully in "The Mystery of Godliness," "the nature of the things delivered" must always be examined. The phrase, "universal tradition," is by a process of elimination found to cover only the teaching of the Apostles, which has been "always and everywhere held." The Church degenerated early, and so became fallible: only in the main points of our creed was it, by reason of its divine nature, powerless to deceive.

There is no more universal or certain tradition than that of "the authentickness of the Canonical books of the Church"; and God's nature demands that He would not make Scripture ambiguous in points necessary to salvation. Wherever possible its literal sense is to be taken. But two cautions to the exegete: firstly, "the Spirit of God cannot contradict itself"; and secondly, the easy passages may explain the more obscure. A good man, well educated and well endowed with Reason, may interpret Scriptural ambiguities not only for himself but for others too. Miracles—More is apparently thinking only of those outside the Bible—are untrustworthy. They may be "crafty delusions" or falsely reported. They must never be allowed to influence the mind if they contradict natural truths, sense, science, common Christian faith, plain doctrine, or assertions in Scripture. By the time More has reached the end of the discourse he has further minimised the importance of tradition. He finds that "the records of the Holy Bible only" are free from the possibility of human perversion. In short, he finds a use for tradition only as a ground for the acceptance of Scripture; and "tradition" comes to signify for him the Authorised canon and its contents. "Rightly circumstantiated sense and Reason, and Holy Writ," he says finally, "are the truest grounds of the certainty of faith."

But what was for More the most essential possession

for the attainment of true knowledge is not explicitly mentioned in the " Brief Discourse." It is a " divine sagacity "—" boniform faculty " seems to be only another name for it—which is inherent in all men, and exercised by men of pure lives. It is the equivalent of the " intellectual touch "—Smith's term for immediate intercourse of Spirit with spirit. The mystical ecstasy cultivated by the Neoplatonists is the state, according to More, in which " divine sagacity " is active. Belonging to the intellect rather than to sensibility, it nevertheless transcends Reason.

More's main philosophical contention is the reality of spiritual being. On the one hand, he combated the sheer materialism of Hobbes, who attempted to give a mechanical interpretation of all reality ; on the other hand, he found Descartes' dualism an unsatisfactory foundation for that new " moral divinity " of which his philosophy was intended only as a prop. He used Cartesian arguments to confound Hobbism ; but he had this in common with his arch-enemy against Descartes, that he believed that ultimate reality is one. More and Descartes are spiritualists : More and Hobbes are monists. There are three possible alternatives to dualism : the denial of spirit, the denial of matter (whither Berkeley tended), and the close correlation of spirit and matter. This last is " vitalism," the name which best describes More's thought. But he was inconsistent. Pure idealism sometimes was substituted for the vital union of spirit and matter. This may be illustrated from his interpretations of the doctrine of innate ideas, among which he includes relative notions—good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and the like—" many logical, metaphysical, mathematical, and some moral notions." Now the idealist would make these " common notions " completely independent of matter : the vitalist would explain their existence as dependent on the activity of mind. More does both. At one time

he makes them the "active sagacity" of the soul, at another time he treats them as separately existent from it.

In his definitions of matter and spirit More opposes Descartes. Spirit, according to the Frenchman, was incorporeal and without extension; matter was extended. More said that spirit as well as body is extended. Spirit is "a substance penetrable and indiscerpible," as opposed to "impenetrable and discerpible" body. Space is infinitely extended, he argued. If all that is extended is matter, then matter is infinite. But only spirit can be infinite. Therefore space and spirit are to be identified. Therefore matter and extension are not synonymous.

Cartesianism was also at fault in More's eyes in that it did not admit a Providential government of the universe. Descartes allowed belief in God as the Creator of the world. But the world since creation, according to him, has been governed by mechanical laws, established at the beginning once and for all time. Even brutes are automata. Against both Hobbes and Descartes More asserted that "there is *no* purely mechanical phenomenon in the whole universe." It was ridiculous, he thought, to look for natural laws capable of explaining why a body, shot into the air, eventually drops to the ground instead of proceeding in a straight line; and why light bodies rise up to the surface through a heavy weight of water!

Consistency must be the test of any philosophy. So in More's, theories are substantiated by their harmonious relationship. God exists because there must be an objective reality correlative with the "common notion" of a necessarily perfect Being. The existence of God is necessary also to explain motion. He is "τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκινητόν." He is a "spiritual substance," the Head of that spiritual hierarchy, which is to be traced from bottom to top of the universe. To bring the sum of all perfections

into touch with an imperfect world, More has recourse to the theory of a "plastical principle," or "soul of nature." It is distinct from God—"the great quarter-master-general of Divine Providence," he calls it: "a substance incorporeal, but without sense and animadversion." Working immediately and immanently, it moulds matter, and is the cause of all processes and products. Below it is a descending scale of subordinate spirits—angels, men, the souls of beasts, the λόγοι σπερματικοί which make plants grow. Spirits are individual; but More is not a rigid pluralist on account of his notions of their common source, and of their penetrability, which admits of the closest possible union between spirits. Man is "the lowest dregs of all the intellectual orders." However, "it is uncleanness of spirit, not distance of place, that dissevers us from the Deity." Man and God, man and nature, are ideally one.

His treatment of the proposition of the immortality of the soul differs from Smith's, in that Smith is obsessed with the theory of σῶμα σῆμα. Smith has faith neither in the resurrection of the body nor in spiritual apparitions. But for More the aim of spirit is not to liberate itself from, but completely to control matter. The soul and matter are never entirely separate. The soul's progress—here at least More is at one with Smith and the whole school—is by virtue. At birth "the plastical principle" moulds the body to receive the soul, for which a material setting is necessary. At death the soul attains to an aerial body; and it may finally acquire an ethereal one. The only witnesses which he allows himself, when he sets out to prove the soul's immortality, are "common notions, external sense, evident and undeniable demonstration." External appearances—the ordered world, ghosts—may second and settle the idea.

In ethics More was in fundamental opposition to both Descartes and Hobbes, who, following Ockam

and Duns Scotus and most of the Schoolmen, were nominalists. Morality was dependent, according to Descartes, on the Will of God, according to Hobbes, on the will of the earthly sovereign. More was an ethical realist. He held that morality is essential. The ideas of good and evil, which Reason approves but did not create, are immutable, and in logical order prior even to God. They became God's thoughts, and man's knowledge of them comes from participation in His Mind. Descartes in effect put the attribute of Power in the Deity above His Goodness. But More can only believe that he spoke "jeeringly to the vulgar," when he said that "God might change the property of a rectangle-triangle if He would."

Nominalism is ethical scepticism. It admits of knowledge only by revelation. The history of Hobbes' life goes some way towards explaining the position in thought which he adopted. Having lived through the Civil War, he was an ardent lover of peace. He concluded that human nature is fundamentally bad. Self-pleasure is the only natural motive of action in man. Civilisation depends on the observance of contracts, which, according to him, are only observed if convenient, or under compulsion. There is no such thing as altruism. Morality is but a form of egoism. To prevent the chaos and misery which would otherwise inevitably arise from the clashes of innumerable egos, a strong state is necessary (whether it was monarchical or oligarchical, Hobbes was indifferent). This is the old taunt that "justice is the interest of the stronger." A new and most formidable Thrasymachus had flung his gauntlet at the new Platonists. A time-honoured piece was to be restaged.

Cudworth, not More, is the great ethicist of the Cambridge Platonists. His treatise on "Eternal and Immutable Morality" will have to be examined at some length. But Whichcote, Smith, More, and

Cudworth all take up the same main line of defence—the belief that there are "innate ideas" of right and wrong, primary and ineradicable. Against Hobbes they insisted on the reality of self-sacrifice. More maintains that social principles express an absolute Good, which the intellect is able to approve. But intellect is not the complete determinant of the will. There is in moral good a "sweetness and flavour" which must first be apprehended by the "boniform faculty." He acknowledges a pleasure resulting from the sense of virtue: egoism of one kind or another cannot be altogether eliminated from a theory of ethics, and no religion has been able to shut its eyes to the universal yearning for ultimate happiness. More's "Enchiridion Ethicum" gives twenty-three "noemata moralia," alleged to be self-evident. Cudworth, while maintaining that men have certain clear ethical axioms, never enumerated them thus copiously. According to More, good things vary in quality and durability: the superior good must be chosen. Allying himself with Descartes, he says against Hobbes that the human passions, if followed according to the laws of nature, are good. Nature's law is "a whisper of the divine law." As an apostate from Calvinism More was particularly eager to vindicate the freedom of the will. Virtue is not a habit, he insisted, but a power by which the soul moderates the passions.

The main tenet of More's psychology is the unity of self-consciousness. He realised what obscurity of thought arises from separating faculties and operations from essence. The activity of the mind is the complement of the passivity of the body. Man is a microcosm. In himself he can see best that process which is at work throughout the universe—spirit "inactuating" matter, and the two combining to make life.

Someone has said that Cartesianism is the body,

Platonism the soul, of More's philosophy. When the new philosophy appeared, he welcomed it with enthusiasm as a mean between atheism and irrational subservience to authority. In 1648 he corresponded with Descartes, and the letters were published in 1662. But between the writing and the publication his ardour had cooled. At first he had clutched at the Cartesian doctrine that spirit is independent of matter. But further consideration suggested that dualism might be as conducive to irreligion, and as careless of morality, as was blatant naturalism. He therefore, as has been said, infused his theory of the "plastical principle" into the God-forsaken universe of Cartesianism. More's philosophy was settled by the time that he set it forth in popular form in his "Divine Dialogues." They comprehend the whole of it in a form that is easy to follow. For that reason, and also because they show the beginning of the waning of his interest in pure philosophy, they are worthy of a short analysis.

They were published in 1668 anonymously, and contain veiled references to More's other works. The background is the meeting of five friends in an arbour on five successive weekdays. They are "all free spirits, mutually permitting each other the liberty of prophesying." There is Cuphophron, the host, "a light and airy-minded Platonist," always ready to champion a lost cause, so that he is "advocate-general" in succession of Descartes, the Paynims, and the Papists. There is Philotheus, "a sincere and earnest lover of God's Truth." He bears the brunt of stating most of the views which the author has predestined to victory. He scarcely ever descends to humour, and, though even-tempered and courteous, is rather a prig. Eupopolis is a loyal statesman, a man of affairs unused to philosophical discussion, who propounds his queries touching the kingdom of God at the beginning, and from time to time breaks silence

when there is a chance to assert his patriotism. Hylobares is Philotheus' understudy. His function is to relieve the protagonist whenever the discussion moves in shallow waters. He is not error-proof; indeed, he starts as a materialist, and at the outset questions the Existence and Providence of God. His difficulties have to be met before Philotheus can proceed to unravel the enigmas of apocalyptic Scripture. Father Euistor, "a man of history, philology, and criticism," is the recorder of the conversations. He supplies circumstantial evidence of historical facts and classical erudition. Ocymo, Cuphophron's boy, is only present in the arbour at the opening of the Fifth Dialogue. He makes one polite answer, and then, true to his name—"he is so called from his nimbleness," we are told—immediately passes out and is forgotten.

Philotheus is the spokesman of More's weightiest conceptions, but not, surely, the complete reflection of his character. The author's wit and sense of humour finds an outlet in Cuphophron; his love of learning and talent for story-telling in Euistor; his patriotism in Philopolis. And Hylobares reminds us of More's early admiration for Descartes.

The first three Dialogues, printed in one volume, set forth "the attributes of God and His Providence at large." They are introduced by a preface of the publisher, which says that the author's object is, neither to lessen God's majesty by making His nature too easily intelligible, nor to make His existence incredible by contradictions in what is ascribed to Him, and by ridiculous statements such as that of the Nullubists, who held that God is nowhere. Cuphophron, he suggests, is a little man so as to resemble Descartes; moreover, Plato was "of no procere stature." His character is such as is usual in men of small physique. If the author may seem to some readers too extreme in his opposition to

Descartes, this, in the publisher's opinion, is rather a virtue than a fault. The author lays his finger on the main philosophical refutation of Cartesianism—that the identification of matter with extension makes matter infinite, and therefore necessary and independent of God—and adds various arguments from Scripture against Descartes' system.

Before God's attributes are examined there is a short demonstration of His existence. A preliminary caution is given, that "the Almighty feels no honour from any man's lie": that is to say, that God is no greater for the ascription of impossible powers to Him. The patent existence of orderly design in Nature, the evidence of man's mind which is "the image of the eternal and immutable intellect of God," the necessity for an explanation why matter, the natural property of which is disunity, holds together, *consensus gentium*, miracles, prophetic utterances—all these together, if none of them separately, make it impossible for an honest man to deny that there is a supreme Spirit. Conclusions incidental to the discussion which have so far been reached are, that "the primordials of the world are not mechanical, but spermatical or vital," and that there is "a universal principle of inward life and motion, containing in it the seminal forms of all things."

So the first predicate of God is necessary existence. The rest of the First Dialogue deals with the objections that seem to some inherent in the notions of eternity, immutability, omniscience, spirituality, and omnipresence. Philotheus explains that eternity need not exclude continuity of duration. As the mountain-rock continues unchanged, while the water of the stream at its base is never the same from one moment to another, and yet rock and river both endure, so it is with God and His creation. It is unreasonable to think of God creating and destroying the world in the same instant; yet past, present, and future are

all before His vision at once. Other popular ideas of Eternity are discussed and ruled out as being incomprehensible.

In some sense God must be thought of as mutable. Against "the calmness and stillness of His all-comprehensive eternity" must be set the notion of His creation and administration of the world. If men say that prayer cannot change Him, Philotheus would have us answer that it is His immutable Will that they who ask shall receive.

Does not omniscience destroy a belief in man's free will, and therefore contradict the very notion of sin? No, for certain prescience of uncertain things is not a perfection; and we need not suppose that God knows beforehand how a self-determinating creature will in every case choose. Yet God knows all that is possible and seemly for Him to know. He has set in motion a broad sequence of cause and effect, within the limits of which His inspired servants can prophesy; though this chain does not include every event, and leaves a sphere in which individuals may choose. Further objections to the idea of God's omniscience evoke the suggestion that much which now seems to our imperfect minds contradictory may not really be so.

The attribute of God which More considers most difficult for men to comprehend is His spirituality. This, he concludes, is due to wrong definitions of "spirit." The view that spirit is unbounded by space and time bristles with (to him) insoluble difficulties, and must therefore be rejected. To take the well-known illustration, all five friends agree that a definition which admits the possibility of hundreds of spirits dancing on a needle's point is untenable. A spirit is a ghost to More's mind, and the universality of ghost stories is in itself sufficient proof of the existence of spirits. If whatsoever is extended is matter, he further argues, then the ridiculous conclusion

emerges that motion itself, which is extended to the same degree as the body moved, is a material phenomenon. Self-immobility is one of the surest attributes of matter ; and the attributes of spirit are the antitheses of the attributes of matter. So, firstly, spirit is self-moving. Moreover, spirit is that which binds together a congeries of atoms, which, left to itself, would dissolve. And it is penetrable, even as matter is impenetrable. The one predicate common to matter and spirit alike is extension, which implies locality. One human soul belongs to one human body, and cannot directly move or mould foreign bodies. Matter is that which is moved ; spirit is that which moves, and also that within which matter is moved ; for vacuum is not material, but " a subtile extension," necessary and antecedent to matter, and " an adumbration " of God's essence.

God's essence may be regarded as extended. He is somewhere, not nowhere. The chief objection brought to the notion of omnipresence is that " this were to draw down Divinity into miry lakes and ditches, and worse-scented places." The answer given is, that " things are only foul relatively. All natural things are equally inoffensive, holy, agreeable to the Eternal Mind." But Cuphophron, the soldier of fortune, is serving temporarily under the Nullubist flag. When the first day's meeting is adjourned he remains unconvinced that spirit, and therefore God, can be regarded as extended. Driven into a corner by the arguments of his friends, he makes his last desperate thrust—that " metaphysics were not metaphysics if they were not mysterious."

Now that the foreground has been cleared, Dialogues II and III can proceed to a justification of the doctrine of God's providence. The difficulties are generally stated in Hylobares' question : Why does a good, wise, and omnipotent Deity allow good to fail and evil to flourish in the world which He has

made? The answer found is, broadly, that human nature being what it is—and we cannot even conceive it other than it is—must needs have objects of "sighs and tears, of smiles and laughter"; it must be given "a varied theatre"; it must have scope for the exercise of an unfettered will. Nature is harsh: yet Providence does not interfere so as to leave nothing to man's wit and virtue. More deals then with suffering mainly on the assumption of an anthropocentric universe. All his arguments are well worn. Humanity is a corporate whole, and individuals must suffer for the greater good of their kind. Yet why does not God intervene when evil is decisively victorious? Because, says Philotheus, "God has made the world as a complete automaton, a machine that is to move upon its own spring and wheels, without the frequent recourse of the Artificer; for that were but a bungle." Some evils, such as fools and madmen, may be explained as warnings; and we are reminded that there is a worse folly than that of the fool, namely, the folly of the atheist and the sinner. Last comes the Platonic solution of the problem—that evil has only a subjective reality. We are often blind to what is best through selfishness. There is no substantial evil in the world but self-love. This is the law of lower creatures, but not of men, who are made in the divine image. That they might be more like Himself, God made men free to choose. They have themselves to blame both for the evil that they suffer and for the evil that they do.

The subject readily lends itself to anecdotes. Barbaric customs, social and religious, are related, explained, and excused. There are religious beliefs and practices among Christian sects, maintains Cuphophron, much more blameworthy than heathen rites. The Roman Church provides him with most illustrations for this contention. More's antipathy to Popery seems gradually to increase through the first

three Dialogues, and in the last two it is given full vent. Speaking of the Romanists, he says in the first : " These are not the Church Catholic, but only a something-more-numerous faction of men." But moderate criticism changes to downright abuse in the third. To quote but one passage, one of the disputants protests : " This figure of Transubstantiation comprises in it such a bundle of barbarities, of unheard-of sottishness and savage cruelties, that there is no one thing parallel to it in all paganism." And he shows how that the decay of the Church was predicted.

In Platonic fashion More closes the discussion of Providence with a myth. Bathynous dreamt that an old man gave him a golden and a silver key. The silver key contained within it an astronomical diagram showing " the true system of the world." The scroll within the golden key was inscribed with twelve aphorisms. These assert, that God is good ; that He created the universe ; that the soul is pre-existent ; that it is necessary that of free agents some should be sinners ; that the regions of happiness exceed those of sin and misery. Bathynous had only read and committed to memory six of the sentences when he was awakened by the braying of two asses. But what he learnt was enough. He had since been able to deduce from those which he saw what must have been the general purport of the other six oracles. The system of the world revealed by the silver key was in accord with Descartes' teaching. But Bathynous remembered seeing written on the second scroll " that the primordials of the world are not mechanical, but spermatical or vital." He thinks he would have found the Sage's philosophy as a whole " more Pythagorical or Platonical than Cartesian . . . for there was also mention of the seminal soul of the world, which some modern writers call the Spirit of Nature."

The remainder of Dialogue III is made up of riders. Pre-existence of souls is discussed as a hypothesis only to be used until a man can swim without it. It may help to vindicate the justice of Providence by suggesting that some are suffering now for sins committed in a previous incarnation. This much is laid down as certain, that if a belief in pre-existence is necessary to confirm a belief in Divine Providence, then its truth cannot be doubted. Many ancient writers of high repute, both Christian and pagan, who held the theory are mentioned. It seems to More to be less fraught with difficulties than traducianism or creationism, the only alternative theories of the soul's origin. Another minor question, Are there other inhabited worlds besides our earth? is not settled; nor is any satisfactory answer found to the inquiry, Why was the world created only six thousand years ago? Times and seasons are unknowable: why, we cannot say. In Christ, Providence's strongest effort for the reclamation of mankind, all uncertainties are silenced. "The divine Humanity or human Divinity of the Son of God is the inmost and deepest arcanum of our Christian religion." The song of Bathynous, which on a note of love and wonder ends the Dialogue, is perhaps worth quoting from:

> "All the substance of our souls
> Up in clouds of incense rolls.
> Leave we nothing to our selves
> Save a voice; what need we else?
> Or an hand to wear and tire
> On the thankful lute or lyre."

The last two Dialogues—dealing with the questions, What is the Kingdom of God? Where to be found? How far has it progressed hitherto in the world? What success is it likely to have had by the end of all things?—were published before the other volume—

as a testimony, says the preface, to the author's greater concern for the interests of Christianity than for the curiosities of philosophy. The publisher commends the bold, outspoken denunciations of the Roman Church at a time when it was "proselytising much." If Behmenists, Cartesians and Platonists consider themselves "not so civilly dealt withal," let them be comforted by the assurances that the author recognised Böhme as a pious and well-meaning man, though an enthusiast, and that he did not think all Cartesians and Platonists as fickle as Cuphophron.

A modern reader will find this volume tedious reading, full as it is of quotations from Isaiah, Daniel, Revelation, and other books of the Bible, ingeniously interpreted as prophecies. Many of them are found to have had fulfilment in the Reformation; others are to be fulfilled in the near future. The author's political sympathies are strongly indicated. More's love of apocalyptic is as naïve as his belief in ghosts and witches. There are earlier essays of his in that field. His contemporaries regarded the subject as especially edifying, and the taste for it is not extinct. Yet nowadays many who started to read the Dialogues in their published order might give them up in disgust after sampling the first two, and so miss much that is interesting and thoroughly readable in the other three. The absolute intolerance of Rome and all things Roman would have won, surely, no more sympathy from Whichcote than it does from us.

More carefully explains that a prophecy may have a moral as well as a political interpretation, and even more than one of the latter species. But his exegesis of prophecy is bathos in comparison with the noble eulogies of Reason to be found in Whichcote's sermons, or the lofty mysticism of Smith at his best. If the "seventh vial" can mean the speedy overthrow of Roman Catholicism, it may equally well mean many other things. If "the four and twenty Elders,"

white-robed and crowned, are a justification for the claim of Lutheran princes to be *summi episcopi*, then Scriptural authority is too adjustable to be of any value. There are bright passages here and there. Like the other Cambridge Platonists, More could point a good moral in an attractive way. Two of the best pieces are his praise of simplicity, and his demonstration of " the efficacy of faith in the power of the Spirit of Christ for the vanquishing of sin." The faith of the earliest Reformers in man's potentiality of becoming God-like greatly needed the reassertion that More gives it against that other kind of faith, common to both Roman and Westminster divines—the faith in lifeless dogmas. There are groping anticipations of modern criticism, as, for example, the suggestion (a rejected one) that the prophecy of captivity in Egypt, contained in Abraham's vision, was " penned after the event." The warning of the necessity of " fixing in the Divine Life " in order to arrive at " the reasons of Divine Truth " ; the assertion that " the soul, by sympathising too much with this earthly and brutish body, becomes brutish herself and loses her Divinity," recall Whichcote and Smith respectively. But by 1668, if it were not that Cudworth still had a valuable message to give, we might have regarded the School as senescent.

CHAPTER V

RALPH CUDWORTH

The Restoration brought a period of decline both in practical morality and in religious zeal. Most Englishmen were eager for peace even with the sacrifice of principles. The Court set an example of licence and levity, refusing either to cogitate on religious dogma or to conform to the high standard of conduct which was associated with the Puritan creed. So Cudworth, when he was engaged in his greatest work, had the discouraging prospect of encountering an unsympathetic and even hostile public opinion. Posterity regards him as the greatest of the group, but his writings received scant recognition until a generation after his death. He combines what is best in each of the other three. Like Whichcote, he was a capable administrator. His eloquence in the pulpit surpassed Smith's. He was "a more solid philosopher" than More, though many of the main points of his system, and certain defects,[1] are the same as those of his colleague.

Born in 1617 at Aller in Somerset, Cudworth went to Emmanuel College in 1632. Having been tutor there for some years, he was appointed Master of Clare at the early age of twenty-seven. The following year he became Professor of Hebrew; and in 1654 he was translated to the mastership of Christ's College. Though he is said to have composed a congratulatory ode in honour of the Restoration, he also received

[1] See page 49.

favour during the former constitution. On March 31, 1647, he was selected to preach before the House of Commons. Thurloe, Cromwell's Secretary of State, was a friend of Cudworth, and more than once solicited his advice as to suitable candidates for State offices. Cudworth was in 1656 chosen as one of the learned advisers to a parliamentary commission for the revision of the authorised English text of the Bible—an abortive project. But he was no time-server. The outcome of the revived monarchy—the Uniformity, Conventicle, and Five Miles Acts—no doubt disappointed him ; and in 1667 he felt it his duty to resist bad appointments by the Crown in his College. Academic duties left little time for literary work, but in 1642 he published " A Discourse on the Lord's Supper," and another short work under the title, " The Union of Christ and the Church ; in a Shadow." It was probably in 1658 that he delivered the " Discourse concerning Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks," but it was not published. There are also the two theses which he wrote in 1644 for the degree of B.D. Of these, " Dantur Boni et Mali Rationes Æternæ et Indispensabiles " is a rough sketch of the subject of the " Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality " ; " Dantur Substantiæ Incorporeæ suâ Naturâ Immortales " outlines one of the fundamental positions in his " Intellectual System." Both probably owe their conception to Hobbes' " De Cive," published a short time before. It may be seen that, while More wearied in later life of philosophy, which had been his main interest as a young man, Cudworth's great philosophical treatises are the products of his maturity, written after his only known essay in eschatology.

The " Discourse on the Lord's Supper " confutes transubstantiation, and denies that the rite is in itself sacrificial, though it is valuable " from the great Sacrifice which it commemorates." Cudworth's

treatment is not substantially different from Laud's, who, in order to save the word 'sacrifice,' and yet repudiate the Roman doctrine, explained the Eucharist as sacrificial in a threefold sense: as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, a sacrifice of ourselves, and a memorial of the Sacrifice on Calvary. "The Union of Christ and the Church; in a Shadow" claims to vindicate "a certain mystical union in marriage, against Roman Catholic and Protestant alike." As a Platonist Cudworth makes the union of Christ and the Church the archetype of marriage union, not the ectype. These early writings, his sermons, and his quiet work at Cambridge were enough to assure his friends of his ability. Worthington wrote from London in 1664 urging him to publish something. But the quarrel with More, which has already been mentioned, killed his plan of a great work on natural ethics.

The "Sermon before the House of Commons" places Cudworth in the first rank of preachers. It is compact with felicitous eloquence and intense sincerity. Provided that it lost nothing in delivery, it must surely have been heard attentively. Brogden in the last century dedicated his edition to W. M. Thackeray, who quoted from it in one of his novels. But it is not as well known now as it deserves to be. Its purpose, says Cudworth in his preface, was "not to contend for this or that opinion; but only to persuade men to the life of Christ as the pith and kernel of all religion." It is incidentally a plea for Parliament's patronage of learning in general, "not that only which furnisheth the pulpit." For all knowledge proceeds from and tends to God, though theology is the "queen" of the sciences. Philosophy, rightly regarded, is "ὕλη τῆς θεολογίας." The sermon touches nearly all the most difficult theological problems—the nature of God, sin, atonement, justification, sanctification, salvation—and brings them all

into relation with the life of love. Christ is "*vitæ magister*, not *scholæ*," and that knowledge or faith which does not issue in works is false. The heart, not the head, is the centre of religion. "No man shall ever be kept out of Heaven for not comprehending mysteries that were beyond the reach of his shallow understanding." Every sect singles out a particular opinion as "the right shibboleth" with which to "pass the guards into Heaven"; and they all lack the one thing necessary—love, itself a "quemdam saporem Dei." Learning is good; "yet our happiness consisteth not in it, but in a certain divine temper and constitution of soul."

His favourite doctrine might be called the eternal incarnation of the Λόγος. Christianity must not be treated as a mere collection of historical facts. "It will not avail us to believe that He was born of a Virgin, unless the power of the Most High overshadow our hearts, and beget Him there likewise." It is within the power of Christians to become "so many mystical Christs." The divine Life within their hearts is "an infant new-born Christ," and "never was any tender infant so dear to the bowels that begot it." The Incarnation, "that great design so long carried in the womb of Eternity," interprets all the specifically Christian doctrines; and it also revolutionises all conceptions of the nature of God, revealing that He is above all the perfect Good. Cudworth makes that identification, which Plato just misses, of God and the "idea" of the Good. Good is not good because God wills it: rather, He is God because He is good. He loves His creatures in so far as they reflect His goodness. A good man finds God better in himself than by "peeping into those hidden rolls and volumes of eternity." A good God cannot acquiesce in the wickedness of the world, as does that false idea of God which antinomians fashion in conformity with their own lusts, drugging their

consciences with the false hope that they are eternally decreed to happiness by the divine Love.

Primarily, then, the Incarnation is the completest revelation of God's Goodness. It is, in the words of Athanasius which Cudworth quotes, "God veiled to draw us up to Him." The "πρῶτον ἀγαθόν" is "the strongest thing in the world." When Truth and Love "both go together, they cannot easily be withstood." The power of God is a magnetic rather than a propelling force. It is "nothing but His goodness strongly reaching all things." Salvation is effected by the revelation of Goodness.

What, then, is sin from which we are saved? "Nothing," answers Cudworth, "but straitness, poverty, and non-entity," being opposed to virtue as darkness is opposed to light. All selfishness is sin as being direct rebellion against God; and apart from self-will there is nothing in the whole world contrary to God. From our sins, not only from "fire and brimstone," Christ is saving us. In technical language, the justification which He gives must necessarily go hand in hand with sanctification. Salvation is not the reward of a belief in some external deeds of the Saviour, but the effect of receiving Him into our hearts. Grace is "holiness militant," glory is "holiness triumphant": and holiness and true happiness are one, other objects of alleged happiness being "mere shadows."

The "Sermon before the Society of Lincoln's Inn" is a sequel to the other, having the same general purpose—an exhortation to the divine life, which is the only true Christianity. But it is not equal to the other sermon either in style or contents. Part of it consists of veiled indictments of the tenets of particular sects. Cudworth's quality as a preacher, however, is sufficiently evinced by his first great sermon.

"The True Intellectual System of the Universe" is written in a more cumbrous and inflated style

than the earlier works. As literature it compares very unfavourably with Hobbes' terse, pithy, almost abrupt sentences. But for its depth of insight, its scientific methods, and above all, its fairness, it must be reckoned a great work. One reason for its initial failure to win popularity is that it seemed to concede too much to pagan philosophy. Dryden said that, in the view of many, Cudworth did not satisfactorily answer those arguments against theism which he so generously cited. The book is only a part of his full design. He meant to divide it into three parts : " I, against Atheism ; II, for natural Justice and Morality founded in the Deity ; III, for Liberty from Necessity and a distributive Justice of Rewards and Punishments in the world." The discouraging reception of the first section deterred him from further prosecuting his plan. But his treatises on morality and free-will show well enough what his line of treatment would have been.

His central thought is the possibility of knowledge through innate notions, which are reflections of the eternal thoughts of God. This is developed, in part at least, from the " Theætetus," and has its exact counterpart in More's system. To Plotinus and Sextus Empiricus he owes the principle of the passivity of sense. (In ascribing the fruits of Greek thought to Moses he was perhaps following a canon of criticism laid down by Tertullian : " Quod prius est hoc sit semen necesse est.") In Hobbes' theory of knowledge as sense-perception he saw the same tendency, destructive of all religion and morality, as had appeared in Protagoras. A " plastical nature "—subordinate to God, incorporeal, unconscious, working " vitally and magically," fatally and sympathetically—is the explanation he gave, following More, to account for physical laws without endangering theism. He asserted, like More, that nature depends for its meaning on spirit which quickens it. The universe can

only be comprehended if it is regarded as an *intellectual* system or whole.

Cudworth concluded that all atheists are materialists, suffering from "pneumatophobia." His defence of theism is elaborate and subtle. (i) He says, "There must of necessity be something self-existent from eternity." "A Being absolutely perfect . . . is that alone to which necessary existence is essential, and of which it is demonstrable." Such a Being is what we mean by "God." Cudworth has to admit, however, that it is "not very probable that many atheists will be convinced" by this argument. It only proves "that if there be anything absolutely perfect, it must exist necessarily and not contingently: but it doth not follow that there must of necessity be such a perfect Being existing." In the end he leaves it to "the intelligent and impartial reader." (ii) He tries again. The idea of God is possible. The idea of God inculcates a belief in His necessary existence. From these two premisses taken together it follows that God actually is. "A perfect, necessarily-existent Being, upon the bare supposition of its non-existence, could no more possibly have been than it could possibly hereafter be; because if it might have been though it be not, then would it not be a necessarily existent Being." "A necessarily existent Being, if it be possible, it is." (iii) Leaving the ontological argument, he maintains that marks of design in nature—that is, the whole world—are probative of God. (iv) At last he lights on the greatest critical difficulties for all non-theistic philosophies. They cannot account for motion and the life of the mind. Cudworth shows that the mechanical theory breaks down, since there must be something prior to and explanatory of mechanical law itself. (v) Cudworth rejects as self-destructive the facile statement that God is a "*præcognitum*" of all sciences.

His "incorporeal substances" are not identical

with the "essences" of the Schoolmen, which are eternal because eternally known by an Eternal Mind. He treated the "ideas," and not God, as first in the scale of human knowledge. Things are what they are by nature, not by will. God cannot alter Truth. He can annihilate, even as He created, a particular thing; but He cannot change its nature. Keeping the metaphor of the "ideas" as thoughts in the divine Mind, they are necessary thoughts, controlling, not controlled by, that Mind. They are not in any sense ultimately subjective. Mathematical and other verities would still exist to determine God's Mind, though finite minds and all finite objects were annihilated. Yet in point of fact human minds participate, though imperfectly, in the knowledge of Truth. "The mind of a rational and intellectual being will of its own accord dance to the pipes of Pan, Nature's intellectual music and harmony." For Cudworth as for Descartes whatever is clearly conceived is an entity, a truth. Error is accounted for by Descartes as bias of will, by Cudworth as obscurity or confusion. "No man ever was or can be deceived," he says, "in taking that for an epistemonical truth which he clearly and distinctly apprehends, but only in assenting to things not clearly apprehended by him, which is the only true original of error."

To defend morality as an internal law of man's being, and not an arbitrary external imposition, soon became the all-absorbing interest of the Cambridge Platonists. The work of the philosophers of the School was to provide a sound ethical theory as the rock on which might be built the good life. Free-will, they determined, is necessary to the very idea of morality. Cudworth divided fatalism into three kinds for attack. There was firstly the materialist view that all things, even God and the soul, are concourses of atoms, controlled solely by mechanical law. This is "atheistical fatalism." Theistic fatalists are

distinguished so as to form the other two groups. In the first he places Descartes and the Scholastic nominalists, who consider that God's will is the ultimate sanction of morality. Such a view "doth in effect make all actions alike necessary to us," Cudworth replies. He calls it "Divine fate immoral," for it allows that God may will evil if He chooses. There are, thirdly, those who identify God with the course of Nature, as did the Stoics. They place morality in necessity, leaving men no such liberty as to make them "capable of praise or dispraise." This view he calls "Divine fate moral": it insists that God's actions are good—one step further—but rules out all freedom of choice in men.

Edward Chandler, Bishop of Durham, in 1731 edited Cudworth's "Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality" for publication. The author had despaired of finding well-disposed readers; but this book was valued highly in the eighteenth century, and is still appreciated. The greater part of it treats of the theory of knowledge, though it "begins and ends with ethical conceptions." In Dr. Nairne's words, it is "a sane and diligent defence of idealism." Dr. Sorley praised it as "a striking contribution to epistemology, and in literary form comparatively free from learned irrelevancies." It owes something to Platonism, as seen through Neoplatonic spectacles, and something to Cartesianism. But it is new and original in the way that it puts forward "that magical union betwixt soul and body."

False ideas of moral law, Cudworth thinks, are due to the misleading analogy of the positive laws of a state. His analysis of law is in the style of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," Book I. The obligatory force of positive laws rests "in the intellectual nature of him that is commanded." The commander is obeyed because of his right to command, as deriving authority from moral law, which is antecedent to the

very idea of personality. Morality originates in the Wisdom and Goodness of God.

The inquiry, How can moral law be recognised? leads to an examination of the respective natures and functions of sense and mind. "The sensible ideas of things are umbratile and evanid images of the sensible things, like shadows projected from these; but knowledge is a comprehension of a thing proleptically, and as it were *a priori*." Sense is variable. It needs a material object on which to operate. It apprehends only the accidents of one particular object placed within its range. Knowledge, on the other hand, is attained by the collation of many impressions produced on one or more of the senses; by judging of their truth or falsity; by denying or attesting their reality (for sensations may be due to phantasms of the imagination). The mind apprehends the universal, abstract, essential, while sense perceives "little by little, and point by point." Sense is a passion, and requires that the body and brain of the subject should be passive. "Yet there is a wonderful scene of various thoughts and motions raised in the mind . . . which are only occasionally invited by those stamps or impressions made from the material fabric and its various furniture without, but owe their true original or efficiency to the innate vigour and activity of the mind itself." Again, "the mind doth not seek its objects of knowledge abroad without itself, but must needs actively comprehend them within itself: which also are immutable things, and always the same." The functions of sense are to give the mind the cue for action when danger is imminent, and to spur the understanding when it is time for it to exercise its own proper function. The mind is active and spontaneous. "It actively protrudes," he says, "its own immediate object from within itself, and comprehends individuals without it, not passively or consequentially, but as it were proleptically, and

not with an ascending but with a descending perception; whereby the mind, first reflecting upon itself and its own ideas, virtually contained in its own omniform cognoscitive power, and thence descending downward, comprehends individual things under them. So that knowledge doth not begin in individuals but endeth in them."

The "ideas," or "νοήματα," or "intelligible forms" are not actually, but always potentially present in the mind. They are not reminiscences of a pre-natal state, but the very rays which ever shine from the Mind of God. Though not subjective, they require what Kant calls "a synthetic act of the understanding." They are non-individual, because they include the "ideas" which relate individuals; non-corporeal, because among them are such "ideas" as wisdom, folly, virtue, vice; non-chimerical, "for art and wisdom are most real things, and beget real effects of the greatest moment and consequence in nature and human life of anything." "Those intelligible forms or essences of things, those forms by which we understand all things, exist nowhere but in the mind itself"; not as substances, not as "modifications of bodies," but as "the several modifications of the passions and affections of our own souls." "Truths are not mere sentences, but living things, and nothing but modifications of mind or intellect." "Those indivisible rationes of a triangle" would be true though there was no world, no mankind. They are abstracted from all sensation. And so the essential existence of "ideas" is made a further proof of God's existence by Cudworth. He is that "infinite and Eternal Mind," which is the home of all ultimate truths; the "one universal mind . . . containing the plot of the whole mundane music, as one entire thing made up of so many several parts within Himself."

Thus the way has been cleared for proceeding to morality. Moral notions are among those eternal and

immutable "ideas" which necessarily determine the Mind of God and the minds of all rational creatures. In morals the "innate active principle" is will, on which moral "ideas" are indelibly stamped. The standard of morality cannot change. In himself a man possesses a complete guide for conduct, surer than the authority of either Church or Scripture.

CHAPTER VI

MINOR MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL

The minor members of the Cambridge group—some of them mere camp-followers—can be dismissed briefly. Dr. Worthington entered Emmanuel as a sizar probably about the same time as John Smith. He held the mastership of Jesus College for ten years, being ejected at the Restoration. There is an anecdote about him as holder of this office, that he objected to a certain candidate for the post of College cook, "being afraid lest one that deals in tobacco coming to the College might be some temptation to the scholars to that vanity." "A good mind and a good life"—for the latter Worthington is more notable. His writings "do not possess much substance," says Principal Tulloch. They were published posthumously under the title, "Discourses and Miscellanies." His "Diary and Correspondence" were edited in 1847 for the Chetham Society. They give a certain amount of historical information, but are "somewhat disappointing." Tillotson's funeral sermon depicts Worthington as a man of wide learning and saintly gentleness. If he shrank from publicity he deprecated such modesty in others. It has been mentioned that he urged Cudworth in a letter of 1664 to publish something; a letter written in 1667 gives More the same advice. Worthington edited Smith's Discourses in 1660, and the works of Mede, the famous interpreter of apocalyptic, in 1665. Other evidences of his patronage of learning are his preface

to an English version of Thomas à Kempis, written in 1677, the double subscription that he contributed towards the expenses of Walton's "Polyglot," and his rescue from oblivion of Horrocks' "Observations."

George Rust has already been mentioned as uttering a challenge as if from the camp of scepticism.[1] The challenge was implicit, and probably Rust himself hardly understood its full meaning. He had close connections with the Cambridge Platonists in his early life. He was one of those recommended by Cudworth to Thurloe for a government appointment, and in the years when he was a fellow of Christ's College he must often have seen and talked with More. After the Restoration he joined his friend, Jeremy Taylor, in Ireland, and in 1667 became Bishop of Dromore. Glanvill edited Rust's "Discourse of Truth" in 1682. In a preface he says of the author, that he was "one of the first in the University who overcame the prejudices of the education of the times. . . . He outgrew the pretended orthodoxy of those days, and addicted himself to the primitive learning and theology, in which he became a great master."

Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely, was a pupil of Smith, a warm admirer of More, and a personal friend of Whichcote and Cudworth. It is generally thought that he is the author of "A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude Men," published in 1662, which defends the Platonists' position as one of "virtuous mediocrity" between Puritanism and Prelatism. He is pre-eminently a preacher, rather than a philosopher. Moreover, he sometimes falls short of that sweetness of temper which was a characteristic of legitimate Platonism in general, and particularly marked in Whichcote and Worthington.

Fowler, Glanvill, and Norris are, like Patrick, "Latitude men" of a controversial type. All three were connected with Oxford, though Glanvill was

[1] See page 51.

educated at Cambridge. Fowler became Bishop of Gloucester in 1691. One of his works led him into a heated quarrel with Bunyan about the doctrine of justification by faith. Glanvill greatly resembles More in his combination of credulity and rationalism. More edited, with large additions of his own, Glanvill's "Sadducismus Triumphatus." His "Vanity of Dogmatising" is a more noteworthy work. Though neither deep nor original, it is exceptionally clever and diverting. Norris, wrote Principal Tulloch, is "the solitary Platonist of the Revolution era," "an idealist of the purest type." Tulloch regards him as filling the gap in English philosophy between Cudworth and Berkeley. He corresponded with More, but "The Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World" was first published as late as 1701–4.

Wilkins is another Oxford man. He was Warden of Wadham College from 1647 to 1667. As a strict Calvinist and the Protector's brother-in-law, he had influence in high quarters during the Commonwealth. He is remarkable both for intellectual gifts and for evenness of temper.

CHAPTER VII

NATHANIEL CULVERWEL

NATHANIEL CULVERWEL stands apart. The adjective 'minor' cannot be justly applied to him either as thinker or as writer. He had made a wide study of philosophy, ancient and modern, and he sifted it all with a keen and impartial discernment. The "Discourse of the Light of Nature" is a piece of well-sustained eloquence. But he is only on the fringe of Cambridge Platonism. He would not have called himself a Platonist at all, and he was a stricter Puritan even than Smith. Nevertheless, that "virtuous mediocrity" of which "S. P." spoke belongs especially to Culverwel. He tempered even the favourite doctrines of his tutor, Whichcote. The few known facts of his life are: that he entered Emmanuel College in 1633, became a Fellow of that college in 1641, suffered in his last years from a "melancholia" which estranged the more fickle of his friends, and died after an all too brief career of very great promise. After his death William Dillingham edited his "Spiritual Opticks" (1651) and "Light of Nature" (1652). Dr. John Browne collected a volume, containing "Mount Ebal" and other minor pieces by Culverwel, in 1857. Some of their titles seem aptly chosen with the purpose of exciting curiosity, as, for instance, "The Act of Oblivion," "The Child's Return," "The White Stone," "The Worth of Souls."

The object of "An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature" is stated in its first chapter: it is "to give unto Reason the things that are Reason's,

and unto Faith the things that are Faith's, to give Faith her full scope, and latitude, and to give Reason also her just bounds, and limits ; this is the first-born, but the other has the blessing." All that we have is the first and, in the author's opinion, the less important half of the work. The second was to have been a vindication of faith in the mysteries of the Gospel against Socinians and other dangerous foes. If part two would have given further evidence of the author's nice balance of mind, we mourn its loss. If, on the other hand, it would have borne a similar relationship to part one as More's second volume of "Divine Dialogues" bears to the first, we are not inconsolable. Culverwel's style is quaint and delightful. He has a trick of imitating the words of Scripture (an example of this is quoted a few lines above) ; and he has fixed titles, constantly recurring, for some of the authors whom he cites. Plutarch is "that elegant moralist," Seneca "that grave moralist," Plato "that divine philosopher" or "that speculative lawgiver." He is fond of definitions, and soundly rebukes many a great philosopher for using the term "light of nature," without explaining what idea they wished it to convey. All of them had tacitly concurred in using the word "nature" as synonymous with the material. But surely, Culverwel objects, the spiritual is natural too. Nature is, firstly, "the very genius of entity . . . 'tis Being itself" ; and, secondly, "a principle of working," ordained by God.

"The laws of nature."—What, then, is Law? Culverwel asks. It is "a moral restraint, and so cannot reach to those things which are necessitated." "A rational creature only is capable of a law, which is a moral restraint." Mechanical laws, accurately speaking, are no laws ; for "where there is no liberty there is no law," and without light there is no choice. "τὸ ὄν is the sure bottom and foundation of every law" ; so that "a law cannot be bribed, though a

judge may." Natural law is the incarnation of the Lex Æterna in rational creatures. When Culverwel says that the original and eternal Law "sprang from the Will of God Himself," Who "has so full and infinite a liberty, as cannot be bounded by a law," this is only a verbal contradiction to Cudworth's view, that morality is seated in God's goodness, and that His nature is such that He himself cannot act against moral law. For a little further on in the Discourse Culverwel says: "in positive law, whether divine or human, acts are to be esteemed evil because they are forbidden; but in the Law of Nature such an evil was intimately and inevitably an evil, though it should not be forbidden." God's Will and Understanding work together, Culverwel thinks. All His commands are rational. "There can be no cause of His Will," only because "His Will is all one with His Essence." Our author frequently identifies God with abstractions. Elsewhere he quotes with approval Seneca's "Providentia, Fatum, Natura, Casus, Fortuna sunt eiusdem Dei varia nomina"; and in this connection he says: "Now this eternal Law, it is not really distinguished from God Himself." The Law of Nature is the rays of the Lex Æterna. Changing the metaphor, it is writing "graven on men's hearts" from birth. That is why God, "when He gave His Law afresh [*i.e.* in the Decalogue], gave it in such a compendious brachygraphy." "The Church is a pillar . . . not to support it [the Law], but to hold it forth." "No pope, nor prince, nor parliament, nor people, nor angel, nor creature can absolve you from it."

By Reason man has power to read the Law of Nature, and Reason is a possession common to all men. It is untrue that the Gentiles "all must light their candles at the Jewish lamp." At least "they ne'er stole first principles." More and Cudworth should have heeded Culverwel's warning—"that

which God has made common, call not thou peculiar." To say that knowledge comes only through tradition, " 'tis to set a Jew in the chair, dictating the Law of Nature with the very same infallibility that the Pope promises himself in determining all points of religion." " This Law, 'tis published by authority from Heaven, and Reason is the printer." An angel, Culverwel affirms, should not be believed, if he were to contradict Reason, which is a light derived directly from God Himself. Reason undoubtedly has become impaired in men : but what vision it has still is not therefore to be mistrusted. " Because Socinus has burnt his wings in this candle of the Lord, must none make use of it ? " he asks. The consent of nations, the decisions of General Councils, the opinions of wise men, may be used as aids to Reason—" Knowledge in its infancy must suck at the breasts of another "—but must not be allowed to usurp Reason's prerogatives. Yet Culverwel sets the Bible in a unique position. " True Reason," he writes, " did never go about to comprise the Bible in its own nut-shell." In discussing the various theories of the origin of the soul, he somewhat naïvely says : " one would think by this that Origen had scarce read Genesis ; he doth in this so contradict the sacred history of the Creation." But, notwithstanding, Reason is never at variance with Scripture. If human beings are essentially rational, Reason, to Culverwel's mind, is essentially human in its function of discovering Truth. God has immediate and *a priori* knowledge of all things. " The Angels," he says, " are above syllogisms ; how much more is God Himself."

Having extolled Reason with every argument, and every metaphor and analogy that his fertile mind could utilise, Culverwel returns in his last chapter to remind his readers that it is only a partial method of knowledge. Reason does not oppose " those high and transcendent mysteries, that are above its own

reach and capacity." "*Lumen fidei et Lumen rationis* may shine both together." "The most that man's Reason can do, is to fill the understanding to the brim; but Faith—*that* throws the soul into the ocean, and lets it roll and bathe itself in the vastness and fullness of a Deity." Reason teaches the Unity of the Godhead; Faith, the Trinity; Reason, Christ's Manhood; Faith, His Godhead; Reason, the immortality of the soul; Faith, the Resurrection of the body. They work as colleagues. "There is no jarring in pure intellectuals." "The light of Reason is calm and peaceable."

Plato and the Platonists are roughly handled here and there in the discourse. Plato, thinks Culverwel, is as much to blame as any of the ancients for limiting the word 'nature' to the material. Again, he dislikes the Platonic contempt for the body: "Plato, it seems, looked upon the body as the blot of Nature. . . . Had he but known what a glory the body was capable of, he would have entertained more honourable thoughts of it." He treats the theories of innate "ideas," pre-existence of the soul, and anamnesis as absurd. Sense, he determines, has an essential part to play in the attainment of knowledge. We are born only with the faculty of knowing, not with any knowledge. The mind itself "doth strongly evince, that the true rise of knowledge is from the observing and comparing of objects." "Yet," he says, "the Platonists in this were commendable, that they looked upon the spirit of a man as the candle of the Lord; though they were deceived in the time when 'twas lighted." On some points Culverwel endorses Aristotle's criticisms of Plato. But he reads Aristotle, too, with reserve. He had no idols. He deprecates the fashion of treating Aristotle as infallible. Aristotle himself would not have wished it: for "how impartially did he deal with his master Plato, and not favour him in any of his errors."

Culverwel is a fitting close to a study of the Cambridge Platonists. Though he shrewdly criticises their more extravagant opinions, he does not dull the glamour of their message. Nay rather, he concentrates in himself all the best of what they had to give. He sat as a pupil under Whichcote, and heard, doubtless, his wonderful sermons ; but retained his sanity of judgment and individuality of outlook. He did not digress on to the paths of false mysticism. Though he died before Cambridge Platonism was complete, he remains the best commentator on it.

Full appreciation of the movement was slow in coming, though certain aspects received recognition in the century that followed. Whichcote's aphorisms, as has been said, found admiring editors and readers. The less valuable works of More continued in popularity. Shaftesbury, Warburton, and Burnet reversed the opinion held by Cudworth's contemporaries of his " Intellectual System " : it was highly estimated on the Continent also. The controversy in which Le Clerc against Boyle defended the theory of a " plastic medium " was once famous. Eighteenth-century realists, notably Locke, continued Cudworth's work of setting morality on a sure basis ; and imitation is, of course, the sincerest flattery. F. D. Maurice's low estimate of the school, as a group of mere moralists, is interesting. Maurice is included in Dr. Inge's Platonic genealogy. But, as Dr. Inge has shown, the succession is loosely held together. There have been Platonists unacquainted even with Plato's works. Poets and prose-writers, divines and laymen—they form a motley crowd ; and it is small wonder if they sometimes misunderstand each other. If modern inquiry and study of our seventeenth-century philosophers has been stimulated partly by mere antiquarian curiosity, the results may nevertheless revive forgotten wisdom. Their philosophy and theology are most valuable because they are the sincere self-expression of good men.

CHAPTER VIII

Epilogue

The Cambridge Platonists have so far been shown mainly in the setting of their own times. It is necessary in conclusion to bring to mind the place which is theirs in a larger picture. They were the torch-bearers in a dark age of that Platonic tradition, which Dean Inge has traced, as a cross-section rather than a line parallel with Catholicism and Protestantism, from St. John to the present day. They kept a light burning : they handed it on to others. This was their service, not to kindle any new, evanescent flame. The task required courage and independence. That task was to clothe old truths of forgotten wisdom in new forms, which should give those truths vital expression. The vitality and vigour of their teaching was felt by their contemporaries. As has been shown, the movement spread to Oxford and bore fruit there, and in time its influence reached beyond England. And its message is still a living message. At least, that is one of the contentions of this essay, which has brought to notice particularly all that has a more modern ring.

It would not be fair to expect here any addition to that full list of names in the Platonic lineage given by the Dean of St. Paul's in his Hulsean lectures. Nor is it necessary to repeat them. But the legitimacy of the union between Christianity and Platonism is still in dispute. There are those who maintain that our Lord, St. Paul, and St. John, even the writer of the

Epistle to the Hebrews, were essentially Jewish in mind, and hardly, if at all, contaminated by Greek thought in general and Platonism in particular. They plead, therefore, for a return to an unadulterated pan-Jewish Christianity. Without attempting to enter the lists, the present writer would urge just this : that the questions of literary dependence and of direct influence from Hellenism need be no great concern of Platonists. Wordsworth read Plato in Nature, not in books. In the same way a kinship between New Testament writers—and indeed Him of Whom they wrote—and Plato need not be accounted for except by the fact that it was the same Spirit of Truth Who inspired all. Clement and Origen, and others since, have felt this, and consciously cemented a union which was always present, even if at first it was only unconscious and implicit. Dr. Muirhead, in an article published in "Mind" some two years ago, calls Cambridge Platonism "the first modern attempt to unite the essential spirit of Christianity with the "essential spirit of Greek philosophy." But he goes on to say that this was no *jeu d'esprit*, for there is "*an essential unity of spirit and principle*" between Christianity and Platonism. Another writer has said of Platonism that "its roots are struck deep in universal human nature."

What is it that links together so many men of different types and different eras ? What are the marks of Christian Platonism ? They are the very doctrines, old in time but ever full of vitality, which are so insisted upon by the teachers whom we have been studying : the divinity of Reason, the interrelation of the good mind and the good life, the harmony beneath the seeming contrariety of the universe, which is throughout informed with a Reason corresponding with the Reason in man. All this was no new revelation, but it was a revelation newly given, or a discovery made anew : hence the freshness with which it

was transmitted. From their lives it is best learnt. These were quiet men in clamorous times. On account of them Cambridge may boast that she was a home of sound learning and bold liberty of thought even during that repressive period, the interregnum.

Reasonableness was the mainspring of their conduct, and 'Reason' is the key-word of their teaching. Generally (though not quite always) the word when they use it means something much larger than logic. It has that larger meaning in Plato's own works. It is the divine spark in man and in nature, something mysterious. A logical deduction is, of course, the work of divine Reason; but so is an intuitive, proleptic apprehension. Reason is a faculty of the mystic as well as of the theologian, of the poet as well as of the philosopher. It is in man a combination of all those universal faculties by which true knowledge is attained. Sometimes it operates darkly, sometimes in the light. And it is no peculiar property of the professional prophet, but the gift which God has made common to all. Therefore it can be trusted; and to trust Reason is true faith.

Because Plato himself was essentially religious he knew the limitations of his dialectic. The fact needs insisting on that he was a prophet with a message, which he, like all prophets, was under constraint to deliver. His business was more than to convince or to silence men's intellects. He did not disdain an appeal to their feelings. Intellectual argument could do something to prepare the ground. Thus far it could go and no farther. Consequently, to consummate the discourse comes the myth. Dr. Stewart in his "Myths of Plato" has shown that Plato's use of myth cannot be condemned as a *dénouement* by means of a sort of *deus ex machina*. Plato fully recognised and took pains to make clear the sheer futility of argument unbacked by appeal to intuitive feeling. With all respect to his greatest exponent, Plato did not neglect

" the irrational part " of man. And so, when Socrates the debater reaches an inevitable *impasse*, Socrates the story-teller takes over the duties of guide. The myths are poetry. They convey from writer to reader that " transcendental feeling " which Dr. Stewart considers the touchstone of all genuine poetry.

The recognition of the importance and purpose of the myth in Plato as an appeal to feeling is necessary to the appreciation of Plotinus as a true Platonist. And the Cambridge Platonists knew Plotinus better than they knew Plato. Admittedly Plotinus went astray in treating the mystical element of human nature as abnormal, and in seeking to arouse it by abnormal methods. In this our Cambridge philosophers parted from him and returned to the right path. Except, perhaps, for the occasional defection of Henry More, their mysticism is never pathological. The *via mystica* along which they lead us has but two stages. These are intellectual courage and practical goodness. The Truth may be obscured by false logic. It is a necessary part of the search to clear this away. But it can even then be no better discerned unless the " filthy mists " of evil passions have also been dispersed. Then, as these two tasks are conjointly undertaken, Truth begins to shine without inducement, and sees reflected in the man her own true countenance.

This epilogue has tried to make clear the essence of the message of the Cambridge Platonists, which cannot be better summarised than by a repetition of those words of Whichcote with which the essay began—" a good mind and a good life." Enough of their writings has been quoted, and enough of their life-stories recounted to illustrate the implications of that motto in great variety. They go to swell a cloud of witnesses, for Platonism claims many names as belonging to its fellowship. But the fullness of its claim is more still. It is that it has that to say which can make contact with all minds and hearts. And so it relies not on the

number of its mouthpieces, nor on the prestige of names, but on its very message. Let that message be heard : let it be sifted : then let it be put to the test of practical experience. It can be rejected, but can never be shown to be unreasonable ; for if it may be stated in one word, that word is Reason.

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